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Volume I of this report (AL 001 821) is a general description of the project, background and related research, the methods employed, and a linguistic analysis of the structural differences in grammar and phonology between non-standard Negro English (NNE) and Standard English (SE). Volume II is directed to a wider range of readers and deals with the differences in the uses of NNE and SE. Included here are a description of the peer groups and vernacular culture studied in Volume I, a description of NNE speech events and group standards of excellence, culture, the subjective evaluation of language differences by adults, and overt attitudes towards language. It is concluded that NNE is a dialect of English with certain extensions and modifications of rules found in other dialects. The verbal capacities of ghetto children are much greater than those found by other investigators. While structural conflict between NNE and SE is one factor in reading failure, functional conflict (cultural conflict between NNE and SE value systems expressed as different language norms) is the chief problem. It is recommended that children learn to read by reading back their own words, that young, male "auxiliary teachers" be used to mediate between teachers and students, and that the teaching of SE in the early grades be linked to the value system the NNE student brings to school. (Author/JD)

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A STUDY OF THE NON-STANDARD ENGLISH OF NEGRO AND PUERTO RICAN SPEAKERS IN NEW YORK CITY

Cooperative Research Project No. 3288

VOLUME II:

The use of language in the speech community

William Labov, Paul Cohen, Clarence Robins
and John Lewis

Columbia University

New York City

1968

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AL 001 822

PREFACE

to Volume II

This is the second volume of the Final Report on Cooperative Research Project 3288 under Contract OE-6-10-059 with the Office of Education. The aims of the research, as outlined in section 1.3, were to determine (1) differences in the structure of non-standard Negro English [NNE] and standard English [SE], and (2) differences in the use of language, in these two communities. The first volume was devoted entirely to the first of these aims, and the present volume to the second.

The structural analysis of NNE phonology and syntax used techniques and terminology which presupposes a certain amount of linguistic training on the part of the reader. In our exploration of variable rules we have incorporated the technical machinery of generative grammar. But there are no current techniques or well-developed theory to deal with the uses of language--with discourse, speech events, verbal skills, and the social controls which govern the development of the vernacular. In the course of our own investigations of discourse, we have achieved a certain level of technology as shown in the rules for ritual sounding in 4.2.3, but this discussion is a self-contained unit. In general, the material of Volume II is accessible to the widest range of readers. The most technical section is perhaps that dealing with subjective reaction tests, where we are building upon a sizeable body of others' work as well as our own, but the results will be easily interpreted by the general reader.

It should be evident from the amount of work reported in both volumes that this is the result of a joint effort. All of this data was collected within the two year span of the research contract. In this volume, most of the analysis as well as the writing is the work of W. Labov, but it embodies the active contributions of the other authors in many ways. The presentation of the value system of the NNE community owes a great deal to C. Robins, and our detailed knowledge of the adolescent peer groups is of course entirely dependent upon the field work and personal insight of John Lewis. The quotations from group sessions and individual interviews in this volume should make it abundantly clear how much of this research is based upon his knowledge of the culture and his style of interviewing. In particular, we cite the lengthy extract from the interview with Akbar at the end of 4.2.5, as an example of the highest level of skill in interviewing technique.

The authors of this volume are indebted to a number of others for their contribution to this research. Most important was the work of Teresa Labov, who analyzed the social structure of adolescent clubs and hang-out groups and the language used in talking about social organization. The initial description of the group structure in 4.1.2 is entirely the product of her research; this framework is utilized in analyzing the linguistic correlates of peer group membership in 4.3.2 and elsewhere throughout this volume.

The section on "Narrative Analysis", 4.8, is the joint production of Joshua Waletzky and W. Labov. Most of the transcription, and a large part of the analysis was the work of Mr. Waletzky, whose important contributions also appear throughout Volume I.

Benji Wald also made a number of valuable contributions to this volume, in the transcription and analysis of toasts, sounding and rifting. We are indebted to him for a number of insights into the WNS and NNE cultural patterns of New York City.

The data on the analysis of the Classroom Correction Tests (4.4) was analyzed by Nancy Gluck, of Teachers' College, who is currently engaged in further research in this area.

For the production and final appearance of this sizeable volume, we are deeply indebted to our secretary, Mrs. Marianne Lewin, whose skill and acumen have helped us avoid many errors and inconsistencies.

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CHAPTER IV

THE USE OF LANGUAGE IN THE NNE COMMUNITY

In this chapter, we will consider some of the important differences between NNE and SE which go beyond the structural contrasts discussed in Chapter III: we will explore differences in the use of language. There are as yet no well-developed tools for the analysis of linguistic functions, or for the place of sentences in discourse. The fundamental units for such an analysis have not yet been established, and in this chapter we will be writing rules of discourse which are altogether new in form and conception (4.2.3); a variety of informal and descriptive techniques will be used in other sections. Some reports will be frankly impressionistic, and others will simply point the way for future research. Nevertheless, it is clear to us that functional differences are more important than structural differences in accounting for the reading failure we have observed in ghetto areas.

Our main finding is that there are a wide variety of verbal skills developed in the NNE community, which have little connection with the school environment, and which are completely unknown to teachers. Furthermore, many of these skills would be defined as irrelevant to school learning, and school learning is felt to be irrelevant to success in the NNE community. This disjunction or lack of relevance is certainly an important factor in reading failure. We will see that there are many individuals in our study who show extraordinary verbal ability outside of school, but who are very poor readers; and there are some individuals who are learning to read quite well but show minimal verbal skills within the peer group. It is a challenging question as to whether the verbal skills native to the NNE community can be used within the current framework of the school curriculum. The major contribution of this chapter will be to bring these skills to the attention of those outside the NNE speech community, and to show how the opposition of values between NNE and SE systems is felt in every speech event, in and out of school.

We will begin with a consideration of the vernacular NNE culture as a whole in its various dimensions, without specific reference to the use of language (4.1). We will then consider a series of specific speech events characteristic of NNE: singing, toasts, sounding and rifting (4.2).

The next section will take up the linguistic correlates of peer-group membership: its effect upon reading, upon the internal structure of language, and the mechanism of social control of language within the peer group (4.3).

Chapter III was based entirely upon the study of connected speech, with minimal reference to formal testing except for the Memory Tests of 3.8. The individual interviews also included a number of formal tests which explored the speakers' attitudes towards language and their perception of SE and NNE values embedded in language. In 4.4, we will report the "Classroom Correction" Tests which registered the subjects' ability to recognize forms that have been stigmatized as non-standard in school. The converse ability is studied in the "Vernacular Correction" Tests of 4.5. In section 4.6, more deep-seated, unconscious values attributed to individual features are studied by means of "Subjective Reaction" Tests. Finally, in 4.7, we consider the "Family Background" Tests, in which subjects' report on the ethnic background of a variety of speakers heard on a test tape: our principal focus here will be on the dimension of white vs. Negro.

The last section 4.8 is reserved for the one speech event which we have studied in the greatest detail: oral narratives of personal experience. In this discussion, we will explore the general structure of narrative, and the ways in which speakers convey to listeners the main point of what they are saying. The study of the internal structure of narrative clauses will yield information on the sources and functions of syntactic complexity, and the development of syntax within narratives from pre-adolescents to adolescents to adults. It will be possible to contrast narratives of vicarious experience with narratives of personal experience, and the syntactic skills of white adolescents with those of Negro adolescents.

4.1 The NNE vernacular culture

The grammar and phonology that we have been studying is used in a cultural matrix which is not well known to most Americans. The knowledge of Negro speech and culture to be obtained from mass media and dialect literature is quite limited; this literature must present images that are comprehensible within the pre-established framework of the reader or viewer. But even the data which is present in the literature is not preserved by most readers, who superimpose their own social and linguistic categories upon it. We have seen in 3.8.1, for example, that the use of it for standard English dummy there is a regular feature of NNE, but not perceived by WNS and SE listeners. Similarly, the verbal abilities and cultural forms native to the ghetto are not perceived. One reason is that NNE members develop a formal, stereotyped form of behavior when confronting SE members-- a form of behavior that may underly the diagnosis of "verbal deprivation". If we were to understand the motivating and controlling factors behind NNE linguistic forms, we must understand the vernacular culture through close contact with members on their own ground. The adult-dominated environments of home and school do not allow this culture to emerge; the techniques we have developed of working with adolescent peer groups, following the methods of participant observation, give us the data we need to describe and account for the use of language. We will begin with a detailed account of the structure of the adolescent peer groups which provides us with the primary data.

4.1.1. The structure of the adolescent peer groups. In ChapterIII we outlined our basic approach to the peer groups, and John Lewis's handling of the interview situation. In this section, we will deal with the structure of the peer groups as revealed in these interviews and in group sessions. The further information which he was able to provide from daily contact with the groups will also be utilized in obtaining a perspective on the vernacular culture.

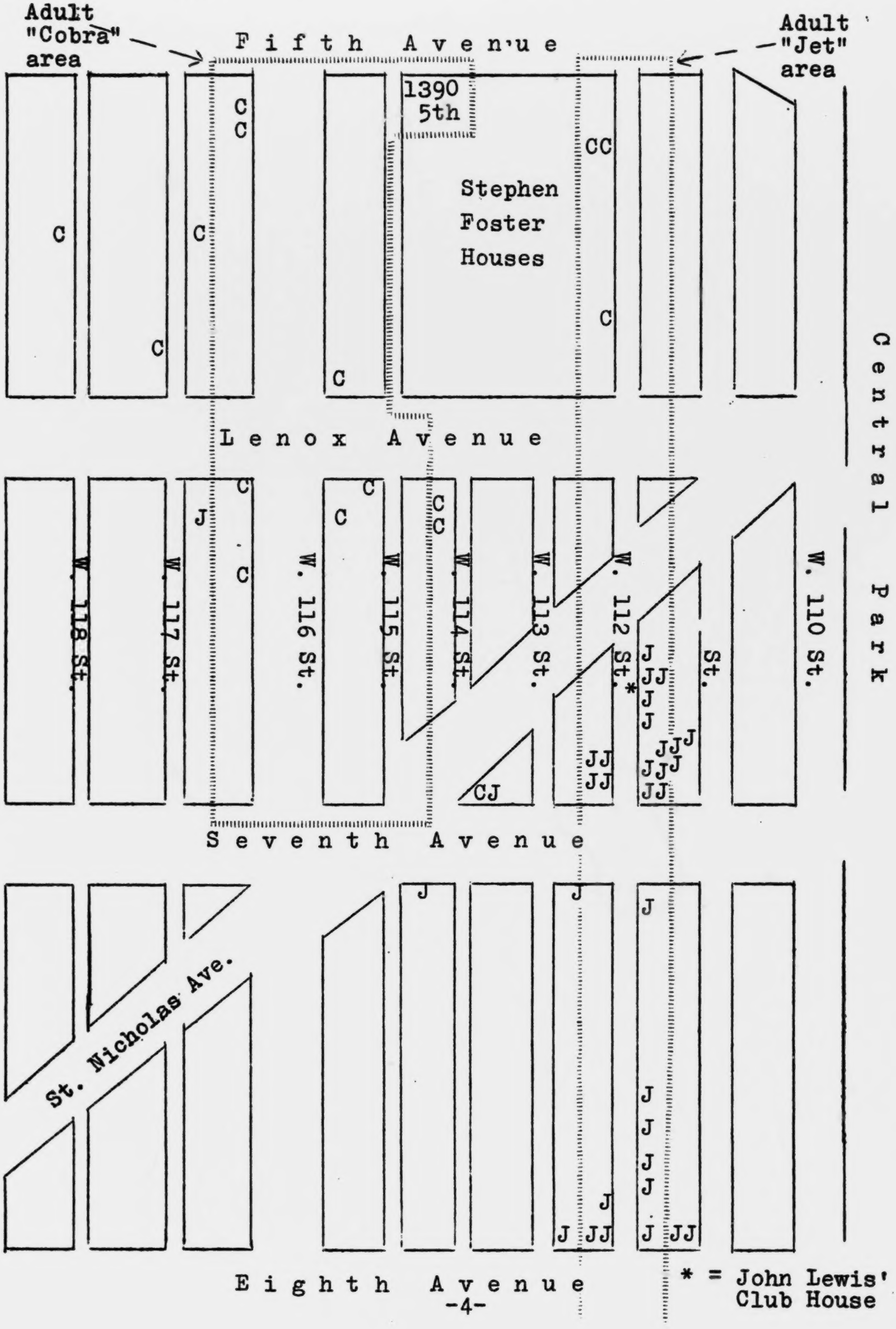
Table 4-1 gives data on the average characteristics of Jet and Cobra members: their ages, family backgrounds, and responses to the question "Who are some of the cats you hang out with?" For over half of the members, the father is not living at home; the female-dominated household is the rule rather than the exception for these groups, especially for the central membership. We do not have direct information on how many families are supported by welfare, but relatively few of the boys stated that their families received money from the City. In both groups, some boys have been suspended from schools; some have been sent to Youth House (the intermediate station for delinquent youth); and some have been sent to reform institutions upstate.

Both the Jets and Cobras are street clubs, organized by the members, without any adult initiation, supervision or guidance. As formal clubs, they share the following features:

1. Leaders: a president, vice-president (number two man), a war lord, (and a prime minister).

2. Members: a set of individuals who are within the club, and separated from outsiders by the fact of membership.

Figure 2-2. The Cobra and Jet territories.


Adult "Cobra" area
Fifth Avenue
Adult "Jet" area
1390 5th
Stephen Foster Houses
Central Park
Lenox Avenue
W. 118 St.
W. 117 St.
W. 116 St.
W. 115 St.
W. 114 St.
W. 113 St.
W. 112 St.
St.
W. 110 St.
Seventh Avenue
St. Nicholas Ave.
Eighth Avenue
C
J
CJ
* = John Lewis' Club House

3. A name.
4. A history and mythology.
5. A song.
6. (Initiation ceremonies.)
7. Associated junior clubs.

The two clubs hang out a few blocks apart and are known to each other. At one time, they were "brother clubs", but during the period we worked with them, they were hostile, and fights between the Jets and Cobras loomed large in the groups' recent history. Figure 2-2 located the members geographically and showed the location of their hang-out sites (reproduced on the following page for the convenience of readers).

The Jets consisted of about 43 individuals who were club members including a half dozen others who, to one degree or another, were associated with the club. The club had been in existence for about seven years with the same leader--Stanley, and many of the original members were still actively involved. Figure 4-1 shows some of the major features of the Jets' history, as reconstituted from various accounts on tape. As shown here, the size of the club has varied in size from twelve to the thirty-seven; at about the time we contacted them, a large group of boys from the adjoining block on 112th Street between 7th and 8th Avenues joined the Jets. This second group still formed a distinct subsection of the Jets, as the data which follows will show. The Cobra complex consisted of 25 individuals interviewed in our study. The Cobras, as we first met them, were in a transitional state, in which black nationalism was becoming an increasingly important focus of concern for some of the older boys. The leader of the Cobras--Speedy--was apparently losing his popularity at the time we first met the group. His vice-president and several of the members were then reported to be serving time upstate. There is less precise evidence on the Cobras' history, but Figure 4-2 shows the main outlines.

The two groups are extremely similar in their basic structure; the strong influence of black nationalism in the Cobras' area seems to provide some of the major differences. In general, it appears that the Cobras were also the more violent group during the period preceding the influence of the Muslim religion and black nationalism.

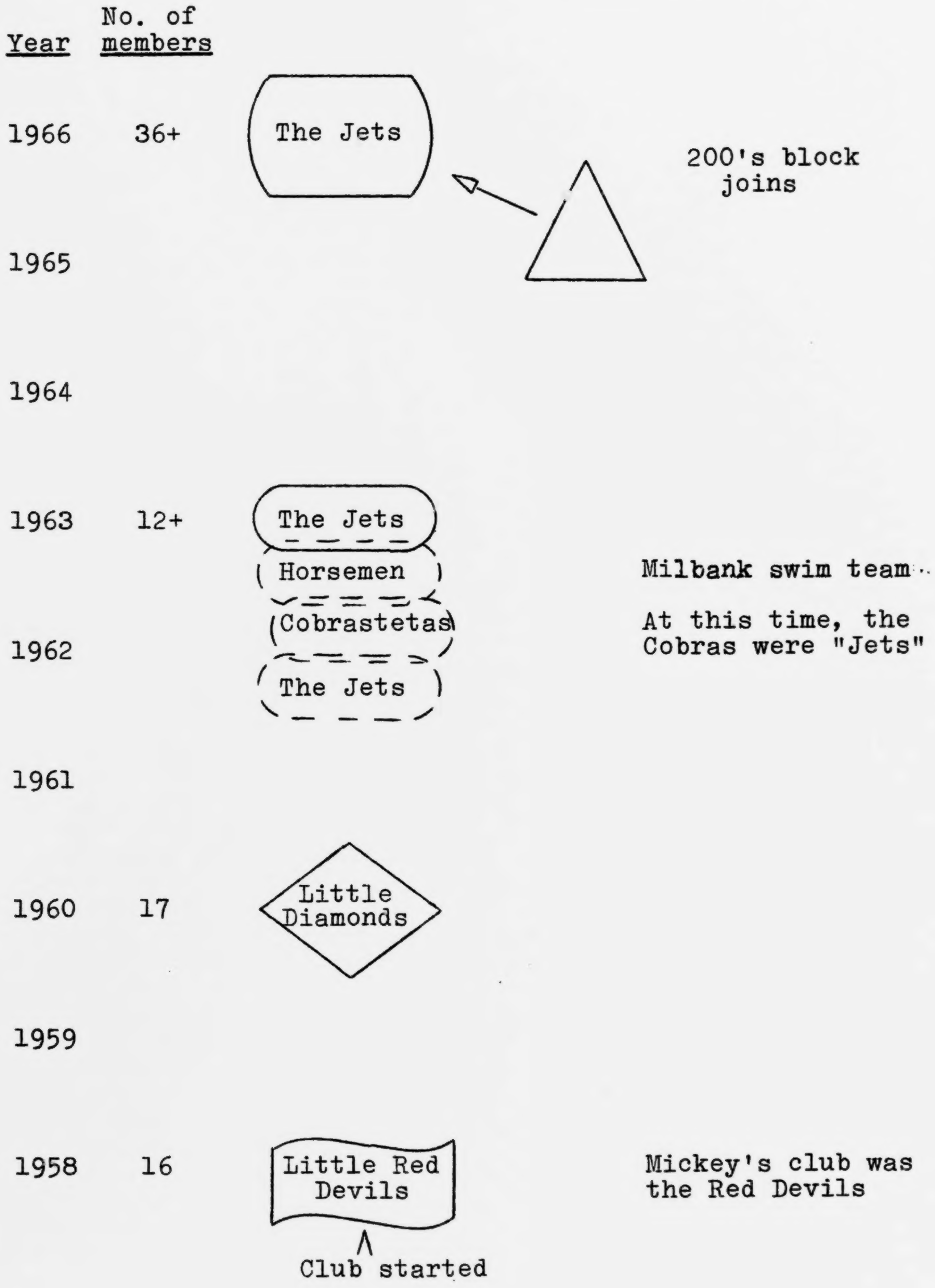
Being a Jet or a Cobra provides an individual with a "social address". His vocabulary and ways of talking about others show that he locates himself in the club and in one of the hang-out groups of which the club is composed. There

TABLE 4-1

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF JET AND COBRA CLUBS

	Cobras	Jets
Persons interviewed	19	36
Average age	14.1	14.2
Families on welfare	27°/o	11°/o
Mother and father living home	41°/o	40°/o
Father not living home	47°/o	50°/o
Average number of persons in hang-out list	7.5	6.6
Total different persons named	54	82
Average namings per person	2.5	3
only those interviewed	4.7	5.1
those not interviewed	1.5	1.1
Club members said to be		
suspended from school	0	2
"upstate" [in correctional institution]	9	3

Figure 4-1. Schematic history of the Jets.


Year
No. of members
1966
36+
The Jets
200's block joins
1965
1964
1963
12+
The Jets
Horsemen
Milbank swim team
Cobrastetas
At this time, the Cobras were "Jets"
1962
The Jets
1961
1960
17
Little Diamonds
1959
1958
16
Little Red Devils
Mickey's club was the Red Devils
Club started

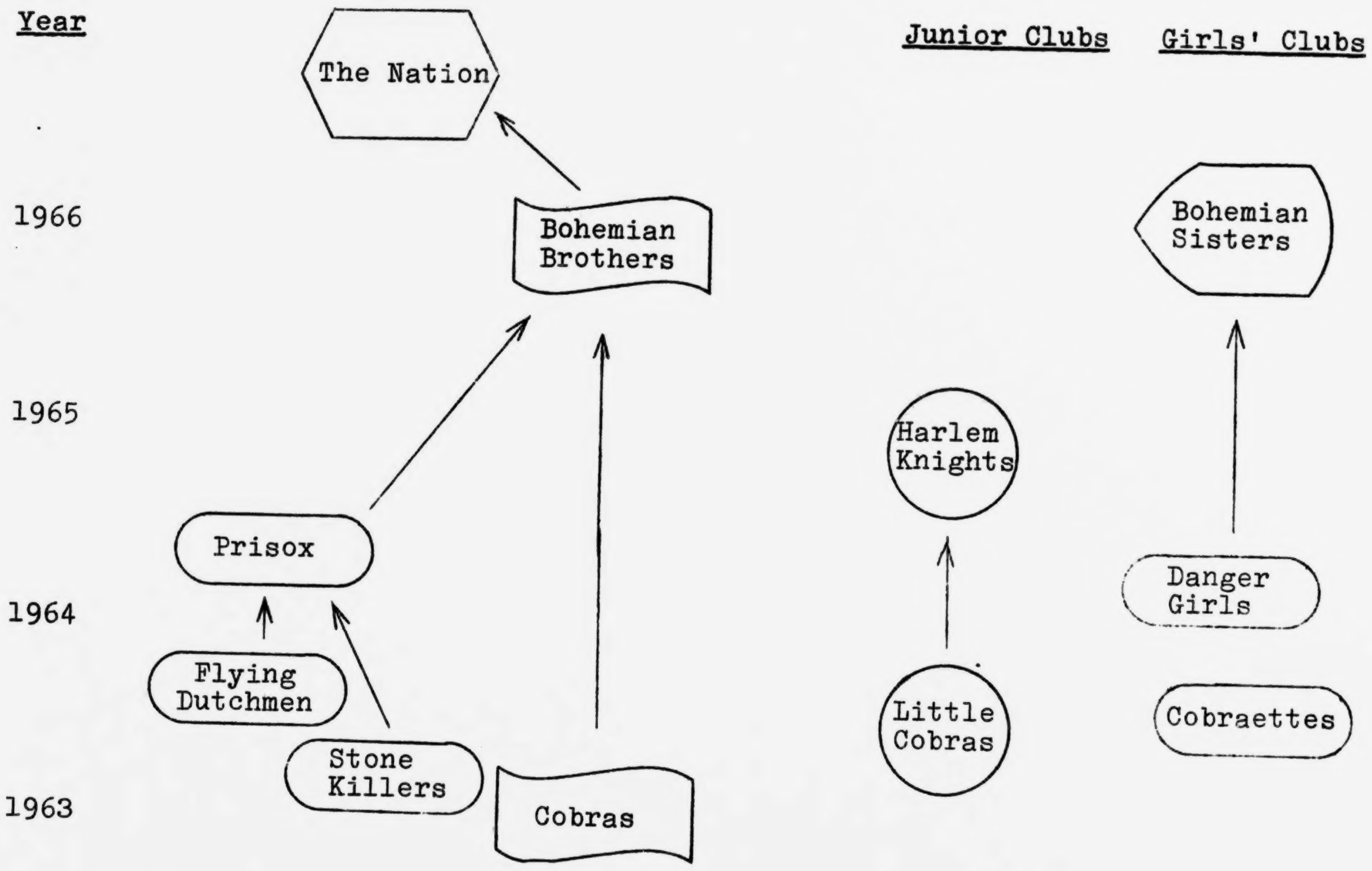

Year
The Nation
Junior Clubs
Girls' Clubs
1966
Bohemian Brothers
Bohemian Sisters
1965
Harlem Knights
Prisox
1964
Danger Girls
Flying Dutchmen
Little Cobras
Cobraettes
Stone Killers
1963
Cobras

Fig. 4-2. Schematic history of the Cobras and associated clubs.

are also a number of individuals interviewed who are not members in the normal sense. First, there are those who are associated with the group from the standpoint of a superior status, and who help out the club in moments of crises. Stanley's older brother Mickey, who was the president of the Red Devils, has such a status, reinforced by widely respected fighting ability. Deuce is another such older associate who is not considered a member proper. This simple association is not a membership. It is typically said of Deuce, 18, that "He be with us when we go to fight", and Deuce says of himself, "I just be with them." Secondly, there are boys who are on the edge or are simply outside of the Jets' influence. Some are detached by the influence of their families, others by their own isolation and lack of awareness. These are the true "Lames" comparable to those we have identified in the project 1390 Fifth Avenue, individuals who are clearly separated from the main peer group ofthe Thunderbirds.

To understand the nature of the boundary separating the Jets and Cobras from others, it may be helpful to ask why anyone would want to be a club member. To understand their vernacular culture, we have to understand what positive values the Jets and Cobras have to offer. The best statements of these values are provided by those who have approached the groups recently from another background. Vaughn is in a unique position because he moved into the area from Washington Heights only one year previously; he is also extremely verbal and has all the necessary equipment to accept the school culture; therefore his selection of the Jets' culture is quite deliberate. [KC = John Lewis]

KC: How long have you been a member of the Jets?
VR: Eh well, eh 'bout--i's--since last summer you might say, an'shi-it.
KC: ...Uhhuh. Now, ah, do you feel that you have to be part of the Jets?
VR: Eh well, I feel, I feel that I should be, let's say, y'unnerstan', because--
KC: Why?
VR: As far as I know, these men...yeah, these men have taught me everything I know about all this bullshit, because I'm uptown, that like a different world an' shi-it. My mind was poisoned, y'know, when I moved down here niggers started, you know, hipping me to little things an' shi-it, so you know I figure I'm learning from it, so why not, y'unnerstan', why not?
KC: But the boys who taught you were from the Jets...
VR: Yeah.
KC: Who?
VR: Niggers that I be with, like this man Junior,
{ Larry and all of them [mother-fuckers, y'unnerstan'] }
KC: { Now dig...like, uh... }
Well, what sort of things have they taught you?...

VR: Eh well, they learned me about reefer an' shi-it. I'm not saying that tha's *good*,..
KC: That's all?
VR: I'm not saying that tha's *good*. They hip me to the whitey's *bull*shit, they hip me to that. Now I don't, I'm not saying that *that's* good, either, y'unnerstan', but I'm just telling you what they *did* for me. [16, Jets, #668]

[NB: Larry's pronunciation of an' shi-it [ænš̆i·t] and of y'unnerstan' [jʌnɔstɛ̃·n] are very frequent markers of the speech of a small sub-set of the Jets, discussed below. The notation of brackets in these extracts is used to indicate mumbling, very low volume speech which would not be picked up except with the lavaliere microphones which we use. Braces indicate simultaneous speech.]

Another statement on the values of the Jets comes from Champ, a younger secondary member.

KC: How about Stan an' 'em? You don't hang out with the big boys?
CH: Some time. When I go to the Center, and what not.
KC: You go t'th' Center. Do you go to the Center a lot?
CH: Mos' a the time. When there's nothin' else to do I go to the Center.
KC: Ah, I want--I want to ask you, man. How come you join the Jets. Do you know?
CH: First reason I joined 'em, 'cuase I like to fight; you know gang fight, and the second reason I joined was while they-while we was 'round there and they have nothin' to do--play 'gainst fightin' each other. And the third reason I f--joined, 'cause I lived around the neighborhood. [12, Jets, #679]

Thus we see that the major values associated with the Jets are mutual support and gain of status in fighting, the prestige of close association and conformity with others, and the inside knowledge proceeding from that association.

Those who are not members explain their position by negating these same values. Edward and David say that they never joined the Jets because "jitterbugging is out of style". [#753]. John M. says that he is not a Jet since he just "likes to be independent" and claims that his friends "are in both of these gangs" [#742]. But Melvin H. was simply ignorant: "I don't know how to join, y'know; I just be with them, that's all. ...I just thought you'd hang out with them, you'd be a Jet, that's all." [#616].

The case of Ricky S. shows the direct interference of a family with upward aspirations on group membership. In 1963, a group of Jets joined a swimming team at Milbank Recreation Center: Stan, Rel, Poochie, Vincent Deedee and Ricky. However, the group is said to have broken up because Ricky's mother did not want him hanging around with "Stanley an' 'em." Since that time, Ricky has not been a member, even when the Jets re-organized. He has three brothers in college, and it seems that he will follow the same route through the influence of his family. Thus the value conflicts which interfere with group membership are centered about fighting and the concerns of school and family vs. the concerns of the group.

The central meaning of membership in the Jets and Cobras revolves about group fighting and the excitement or "kicks" provided by gang fights. But there are in addition obligations which group membership imposes. What do members expect of each other? It is clear that one obligation is to come when summoned,and join in a group fight. We have studied in detail many narratives which concern a single fight--the fight in Central Park--and in all of these, it is apparent that the underlying norm is that Jet members should come and stand by one another in moments of crisis. Many members define the Jet values as "all for one and one for all". We have a number of overt statements on this point in answer to our question on the starting point of fights, "Do rumbles ever start over chicks or dough?"

> If anybody tries to mess around, that's when we fight.
>
> If somebody hit our boy, he tells us and then is when we start to fight. [14, Jets, #529]

The Cobras document the same ideology, in which group fighting is said to occur primarily in defense of a member who has been attacked: Thus Paris ["Akbar"] of the Cobras answers KC:

KC: Do rumbles ever start over chicks or dough?
Pa: Over girls?
KC: Uhhuh, or money.
Pa: Mos' of the--yeah, mos' of the time--no, mos' of the time it start when somebody bother another boy of us--our--our--one of our boys.
KC: Like how?
Pa: Like if somebody hit our boy we gon' g--, he come back and tell us, then we come down and start a fight. [16, Cobras, #607]

There is a deliberate rejection of the idea that fights are motivated by individual concerns (which is in fact the case with individual fights) and an emphasis on the central values of group solidarity. As Stanley says "...fight like in the gang, they help out for each other." [15, Jets, #524]

The best approach to an understanding of the values of the Jets is through one of the narratives of the fight in Central Park, in this case supplied by Martin ["Its"], a 13-year-old secondary member of the club. Its was in a good position to give this account, since the fight began when the Cobras threw him in the lake (a not uncommon act--we have other accounts of similar incidents). Note that this occurred in the midst of good-natured play of a fairly juvenile character in which both groups were involved.

KC: What was the best rumble you ever saw?
ITS: The one we had 112.
KC: With who?
ITS: With the--um--Cobras. They had--we had a fight, I, we had a fight with--cause they threw me in the water in the Lake and then we had a fight over in the project.
KC: Oh, you was the one they threw in the water.
ITS: Ya heard about that?
KC: Yeah, how come they threw you in the water?
ITS: I don't know, they started some jive--some...
KC: Well how'd it start first of all?
ITS: So you see we was in the Park, all of us was in the Park; so then we was on the truck and was rolling it and then--then we said y'all gotta roll us. And then they rolled us in and then--we had to roll them again, something like that. Then they--then we got mad and something like that when they--so they say we throw one of your boys in the water and then we say yeah, and then they did it. They threw--they threw me in the water. They grabbed me--moved out by the bench and they grabbed me and picked me up and I was tryin' to get loose and then they drop' me in the water. They said I--, they tried to hold me, I let go of them. They dropped me then.

At this point, the two main leaders of the group, Stanley (president) and Rednall (vice-president) appeared and made the formal arrangements for the fight in defense of their member.[1] The choice of weapons is up to the injured party.

ITS: And then, y'know, we comin' out the Park and met Rednall and Stanley. They said, uh--go ahead around the block, they said; what you want to choose to have a fight; I mean a fight, with guns and weapons like that--or a fight with fists. Well I ain't say; I said fists something like that. So then we went, you know they saw us comin' round the block and we had the war that night. We didn't have so many guys and they beat us. Steve had a lot of guys and then you know I started to fight, I wa' goin', I w' fight somebody. Then all of a sudden I got hit in my eye so then--I--and I couldn't see everythin'. I was gettin' ready to fight somebody, they hit me

The fact that Its was hit in the eye became an important point and even the Cobras knew that someone among the Jets was hurt in the eye.

ITS: And then then all of a sudden all them guys started comin' over the fence and all that. They had a--they got more guys and all that And they beat us, and Rednall and Larry, y'know Hawthorne?

KC: Uhhuh.

ITS: Then, oh, I mean Stanley and Haw--Stanley and all of 'em, 'n' Larry, they was the only ones in the Park fighting all them guys. And so then they--they--so the next night we sent--next night we got all the--all the boys we asked up there and when they fight, if they know any group. And so they all them, we had all them guys, up there!

KC: The Turbans?

ITS: Uhhuh.

KC: And so what happened then?

ITS: And so then we asked them and they say "Yeah they help us and then I think only a few little guys was in the Park and they was surrounded by all them Cobras and then all of a sudden all, all the boys, all all the Jets and all the guys--so, they came over the wall!

At this point, Its uses the Jets' name for the first time in his narrative. This is the point, in fact where the Jets are actually called into existence, the moment which is the fundamental justification of the existence of the club.

ITS: and Re-- you know Red--uh you ain't know Harold Hopkins? He got sent up.
KC: Uhhuh.
ITS: He got sent up. He--he was scared to hit this guy and then Peaches pushed Hop out the way and punched that guy in his eye. Then y'know-- and I saw this guy and Stan saw this guy in the corner and I beat him up, punched him all in his face.
KC: Who is this guy? Do you know his name?
ITS: Naw.
KC: No. Uhhuh.
ITS: And so then we went back. I think we went back around the block and all that. And then Rednall-- and then yeah we went back around the block.

The Cobras are seen by the Jets as wild, unaccountable and dangerous opponents. Most of them know the names of the Cobra leaders--Speedy and Booger--but the rest are anonymous. The central figures of the Fight in Central Park for Jets are Stanley and Larry, who stood up alone in the first encounter. The leaders do not let this point be forgotten for a moment. Thus in one of our group sessions, when KC refers to the fight:

KC: What happened the night you and the Cobras were goin' to fight?
Rednall: Boah, we fucked 'em up!
Stanley: WHYNTCHOU SHUT UP?!! ... That guy was a faggot, he ran...
Larry: Tell 'em we fucked 'em up, Stan! Man, it was me and you!
Stanley: Yeah, me and Larry, jus' fucked 'em up...

Though Rednall tries to object, and there is considerable clamor from other sources, the fundamental claim stands that Stan and Larry performed the obligations of Jet members better than anyone else. Yet this obligation is not as absolute as it seems on the surface; for several members were not present at the fight, and freely admit it; Rednall is put down, but not censured, for he continues as number two man of the club. The degree of seriousness of any of these interchanges is difficult to assess. This is a fundamental problem of interpretation which prevades the analysis of the group sessions. The activity Stanley is engaged in is LOUDING: a series of loud, negative remarks about someone's behavior (usually in the third person) in the presence of others. Often louding leads to fights, and there is plenty of scuffling between Stanley and Rednall in this session, but it is not serious fighting. Louding, unlike the conventional insults of sounding (4.2.3), is directed at actual violations of norms of the group, and can be seen as a means of social control through the use of language.

Until the Cobras became strongly nationalistic, violence and fighting were even more important in their spectrum of club activities. In fact, a group of girls associated with the Cobras (the Cobraettes and Danger Girls) give this report of the club's dissatisfaction with Speedy, the president:

> ...they say that Speedy wasn't a good president; that he was weak, and he didn't know, he didn't bring no action to the club

As a result, the club began to break up.

> so they just changed Speedy. They said, "Well Speedy, I'm not in your club no more," and all that.
> [#587]

Shortly after we began to work with the Cobras, the group did in fact break up. Our early observations of Speedy as a leader in group sessions showed he had difficulty in controlling the group, and the instability was followed shortly thereafter by the formation of a new group, the Bohemian Brothers, as indicated in Figure 4-2. The Bohemian Brothers included only those who were strongly influenced by nationalistic thinking; Speedy,and his follower Eric, were out of it. The cultural orientation of the Bohemian Brothers modified the basic forms of the vernacular culture in ways that will be discussed below.

The common value system of the Jets and Cobras, as discussed above, emphasizes several of the dominant themes of "lower-class culture" as described by Walter B. Miller (1958). Miller's description of this cultural pattern seems to us an excellent description of the behavioral norm found in many adolescent urban societies, white and Negro, which affects children from lower-class, working-class, and lower middle-class homes. He lists a number of "focal concerns", which include in our formulation: toughness, a concern with physical strength and fighting skill; kicks, a concern with the excitement associated with fighting, alcohol, drugs; trouble, a concern with conflict with police and other authorites; smarts, the use of language and intelligence to manipulate others; fate, a concern with luck, chance, belief in the inevitability of events. The first three foci of lower-class interests have been illustrated by the discussion of club values given above, and will be further illustrated by the material provided on hang-out groups and folklore given below. The last two concerns will be amply exemplified in the discussions of verbal skills.

4.1.2. The hang out groups. The social structure of the Jets and Cobras is more complex than the description of the club activities themselves would suggest. The clubs are actually superordinate organizations, larger units of social structure than the primary groups. NNE members normally associate in hang out groups, smaller aggregates of friends involved in a range of daily transactions quite different from the Jet activity. Indeed, the primary influence and the major controls upon linguistic behavior stem from these hang out groups, as we shall see below. Our basic information on the structure of the hang out groups is derived from two questions in Q-HAR-TA-Hip.

> Is there a bunch of cats you hang out with?
>
> Of all the cats you hang out with, who's the leader?

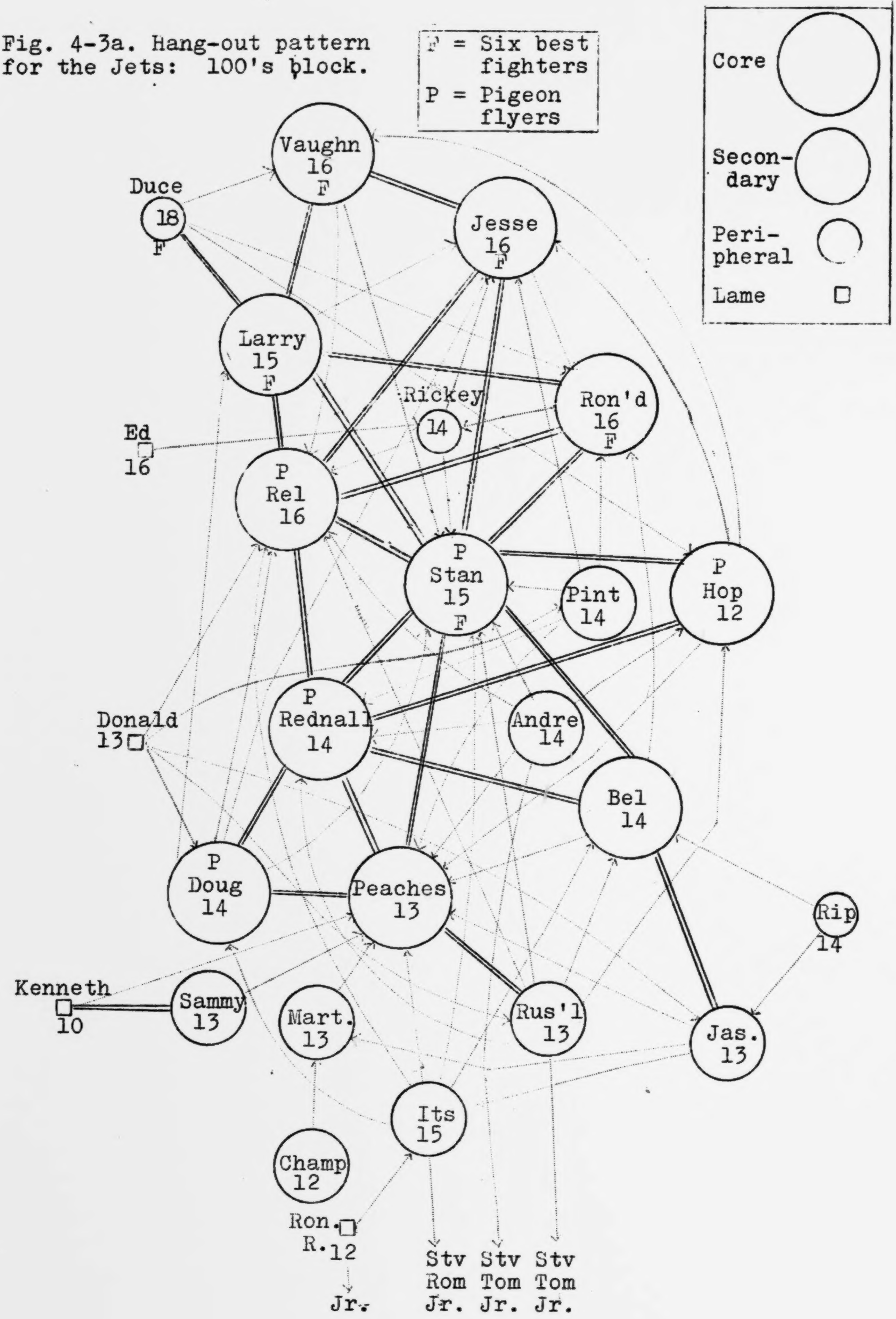
Answers to these questions are not simple, for they often involve discussions in which the following points may or may not be made clear:

a) The cats one hangs out with are not the same as the club.

b) The club has a leader, but the hang out groups have no named or overt leader.

It was only gradually that the interviewer and other members of the staff became aware of this difference, and it is only through close examination of the actual responses that we can show the full complexity of the social structures involved. Figure 4-3 is a sociometric diagram of the Jets which shows the members related by their acts of naming the persons they hang out with. The heavy lines represent reciprocal names and the narrow solid lines with arrow heads represent non-reciprocal headings. Figure 4-3 is constructed by minimizing the length of these lines. The diagram is broken into two parts: Figure 4-3a represents the original core of the Jets (going back to the Little Red Devils of 1959). This is the tightly-knit group which is located on 112th Street, between Lenox and 7th Avenues (see Figure 2-2). Since the street numbers here are in the 100's, this will be knows as the "100's" group. Figure 4-3b shows the separate sub-group of more recent Jets in the "200's" block between 7th and 8th Avenues. This group was formerly known as the Turbans and in the account of the Fight in Central Park, we saw them summoned as the "Turbans". They joined the Jets at just about the time that we first contacted the club. As the diagrams show, there is relatively very little connection between the two groups in the way of hang out patterns. The chief connections are through André,

Fig. 4-3a. Hang-out pattern for the Jets: 100's block.


F = Six best fighters
P = Pigeon flyers
Core
Secon-dary
Peri-pheral
Lame
Vaughn 16 F
Duce 18 F
Jesse 16 F
Larry 15 F
Rickey 14
Ron'd 16 F
Ed 16
P Rel 16
P Stan 15 F
Pint 14
P Hop 12
P Rednall 14
Andre 14
Donald 13
Bel 14
P Doug 14
Peaches 13
Rip 14
Kenneth 10
Sammy 13
Mart. 13
Rus'l 13
Jas. 13
Its 15
Champ 12
Ron. R. 12
Jr.
Stv Rom Jr.
Stv Tom Jr.
Stv Tom Jr.

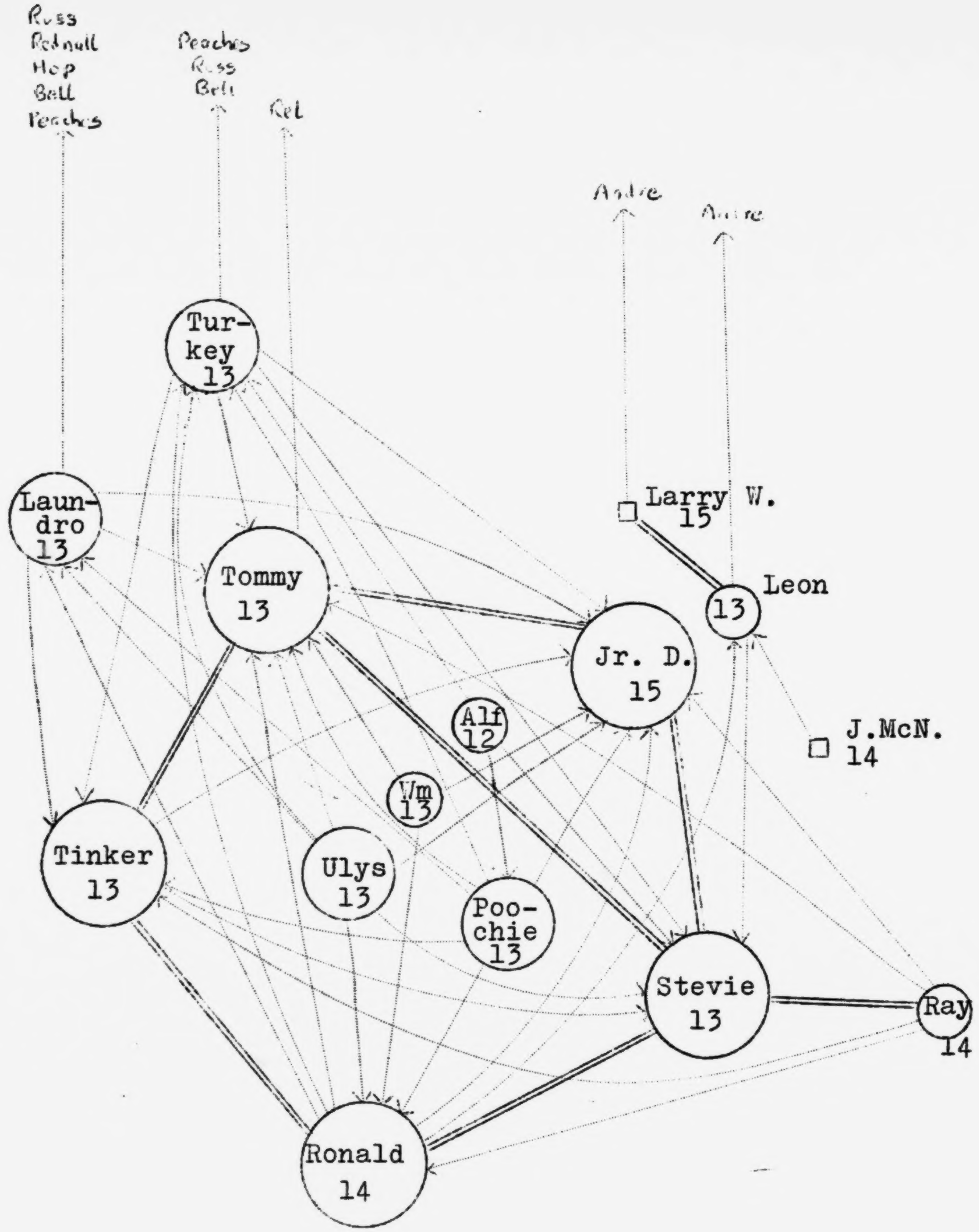

Russ
Rednull
Hop
Bell
Peaches
Peaches
Russ
Bell
Rel
Andre
Andre
Tur-key 13
Laun-dro 13
Tommy 13
Larry W. 15
Leon 13
Jr. D. 15
Alf 12
J.McN. 14
Wm 13
Tinker 13
Ulys 13
Poo-chie 13
Stevie 13
Ray 14
Ronald 14

Fig. 4-3b. Hang-out pattern for the Jets: 200's block.

Turkey and Laundro, who name members of the 100's club, but are not named by any of them. On the side of the 100's block the connection is provided by two peripheral figures, James ("Its"' brother) and Russell, who named four members of the 200's block.

Each half of Figure 3-4 is centered about a closely inter-related system of reciprocal namings, and clustered about this system can be seen secondary figures who name others much more than they are named themselves. In the figure, these central or core persons are shown as larger and the secondary figures as smaller circles. The center of the 100's block is clearly Stanley. One clear measure of this centrality can be seen in Table 4-2, which shows for each individual the number who named him, the number he names, and the total number of reciprocal namings. Stanley is the only person who is named by everybody he names. He is also named by seven other persons, and his total of 15 mentions clearly makes him as one of the central members of the group. All leaders of the group receive ten or more mentions:

Stanley	President	15
Rednall	Vice President	10
Rel	Prime Minister	15
Bel	War Lord	10

The only person who is named more than these is Peaches, younger brother of Larry and Jessie, who is generally considered the leader of "Junior Jets". We also see that Junior and Tommy receive a very large number of mentions in the 200's block. By a number of measures, Tommy, Junior and Stevie are the verbal leaders of that group.

Close examination of the 100's block shows that the structure is held together by one person--Stanley, who actually unites two hang out groups. One hang out group is defined as "the six best fighters" by two observers, Larry [#560] and Doug [#527]. This group consists of Stanley, Vaughn, Jessie, Larry, Ronald (and Deuce--an older associate). The second group is the pigeon flyers, which consists of Stanley, Hop, Rednall, Doug, Rel (and Mickey--Stanley's older brother). The following discussion between KC and Doug gives a picture of the activity of flying pigeons and clearly shows the disjunction between the Jets and this particular hang out group.

TABLE 4-2

NUMBER OF NAMES GIVEN AND NUMBER OF TIMES NAMED IN ANSWERS TO THE HANG-OUT QUESTION

	Name	Age	G	R	Rp
	JETS: 100's Core				
	Stanley	15	8	15	8
	Jesse H.	16	6	9	3
F	Vaughn	16	4	4	2
	Ronald W.	16	4	7	3
	Larry H.	15	16	5	4
	Rel	16	6	15	5
	Rednall	14	6	10	6
	Doug	14	6	4	2
P	Bell	14	7	10	3
	Peaches	13	4	16	4
	Hop	12	8	5	2
	JETS: 100's Secondary				
	Martin B.	13	1	2	0
	Russell	13	9	4	1
	James T.	13	7	4	1
	Champ	12	3	0	0
	Sammy	12	2	1	1
	Pint	14	6	1	0
	Its	15	9	1	0
	Andre	14	13	2	0
	JETS: 100's Peripheral				
	Duce	18	8	2	1
	Rickey S.	16	3	2	0
	Rip	14	9	0	0
	JET AREA Lames				
	David D.	17	0	0	0
	Steve Y.	17	0	0	0
	Ed S.	16	1	0	0
	Larry W.	15	10	1	1
	John McN.	14	3	0	0
	Donald G.	13	11	0	0
	Ronald R.	12	5	0	0
	Kenneth A.	10	6	1	1

G: no. of names given
R: no. of times named
Rp: reciprocal namings
*: did not give list

	Name	Age	G	R	Rp
	JETS: 200's Core				
	Junior D.	15	2	12	2
	Ronald F.	14	8	6	2
	Tommy	13	5	13	3
	Stevie W.	13	4	14	4
	Tinker	13	6	7	3
	JETS: 200's Secondary				
	Ulysses	13	8	0	0
	Poochee	13	8	0	0
	Turkey	13	7	3	0
	Laundro	13	9	2	0
	JETS: 200's Peripheral				
	Ray	14	5	1	1
	Leon	13	10	3	1
	William G.	12	10	2	0
	Alfred	12	8	0	0

****

	Name	Age	G	R	Rp
	COBRAS: Core				
	Speedy J.	15	16	7	4
	Eric	15	9	5	2
	Milton	13	*	7	*
	Keith	12	14	2	2
	Arnold J.	12	8	5	2
	Rufus	17	2	3	1
	William B.	17	6	2	1
	Sammy J.	16	8	5	2
BB	Paris	16	8	3	1
	Derek	15	*	10	*
	Stanley K.	15	7	8	2
	Junior H.	13	11	2	1
	COBRAS: Secondary				
	Victor	13	12	1	0
	Bennie	13	2	0	0
	Eugene	12	8	0	0
	Eddie B.	11	4	2	0
	Michael	15	5	5	1
BB	Steve	15	10	1	0
	COBRAS: Peripheral				
	Willie B.	12	5	0	0

> Well, it happened that one day me and a friend--y'know Hop? (Uhhuh.) Well, he had some money; so he had nothing to do with it, so he tol' me he had some milk crates up on the roof. So what we did, I asked him if I could fly one of them, so we did: we bought pigeons and put them there. Then we had to move the milk crates and when we had to move it, Stan, Rel and Rednall found out about it, and it was their milk crates, so we moved them and we got the pigeons in the milk crates too. So we built a coop, so now all six of us fly, and Mickey Collins as well. The way he came to fly, really you can't say. We had only around fifty birds at the time--no, around twenty birds at the time, and so he came up on the roof 'cause he had saw our birds flying. And oncet he found out he asked us could he--he didn't ask, he just said he was flying, and we took it just like that because we knew he would buy a lot of birds. (Just like that.)

The activity of flying pigeons is widespread in Central Harlem. Many boys keep pigeons on the roof tops in coops which they construct. These are not the ordinary street pigeons which inhabit the city, but rather the well-developed range of homing pigeons, commercially bred. A great deal of specialized knowledge and care is required and many of the boys become expert in handling and flying the pigeons. Their primary problems is with the landlords who frequently object to having coops on the roof; in the case of the Jets, one landlord succeeded in putting an end to the boys' activity entirely.

These hang out groups are "closed networks" as opposed to "open networks", in the sense employed by Gumperz (1964)--a group of people whose obligations and interactions are confined within the group. Considering the number of individuals who might have been named outside the group, it is remarkable to know that the total number of namings within the group exceeds the total number of individuals who were named by anyone, including marginal members, outside the group.

Each symbol inside Fig. 4-3 is given the name of the individual, his age and one of four symbols C, S, P or L. These are the fundamental distinctions between the peer groups, and may be defined as follows:

C. Core members involved in the central network of reciprocal namings.

S. Secondary members who are oriented towards these networks, are recognized as members, but who have lower status or prestige..

P. Peripheral individuals who are only marginally attached to the group for one reason or another, and who have obligations towards other groups.

L. Lames, isolated individuals who are detached from the group by either their participation in a separate value system or by their lack of participation in the vernacular culture.

The social structure of the Jets then, consists of the of the over-arching named group, and a number of unnamed hang out groups within it. Most of the time, the boys interact in their hang out groups. As far as we can see, the Jets are rarely called into existence proper: when the group fights as a whole, when we go out with a group as a whole, when the Jet song is sung, and when the past history of the group is discussed.

Structure of the Cobras. In their major outline, the Cobras follow the same pattern as the Jets. Figure 4-4 shows the structure of the Cobras according to answers to the hang out question. The Cobras are also seen to break down into two major groups but here the difference is not so much geographic or activity, so much as ideology. As mentioned in Chapter II, the Cobras were strongly influenced by nationalistic thinking and shortly after we met them, the group dissolved and reformed with members of other groups as the Bohemian Brothers. A number of the Cobras --Speedy, Eric and others--were not interested in nationalism, and some of the Bohemian Brothers charge that these boys actually eat pork. The overt attitude towards pork is one of the fundamental principles of Black Muslim ideology, and defiance of this norm places an individual well outside the group. One distinguishing mark of the Bohemian Brothers is the use of an attribute, an Arabic name which supplants the Christian or "slave" name. These attributes are placed in parentheses after the names of members. The Bohemian Brothers continued under the leadership of Rufus ("Quahab"), who had not been a core member of the Cobras. Members developed full participation in a number of nationalist practices, some of which are discussed below. Shortly afterward, the Bohemian Brothers **dissolved and the group became attached to "the Nation of Islam".**

The major difference between the Jets and the Cobras was participation in nationalist thinking. In all other respects, the groups were very similar. Some of the superficial linguistic differences between the groups can be attributed directly to Black Nationalism, but there are other subtle differences which are not so connected. Some of these direct influences of peer-group membership are discussed below in section 4.3.

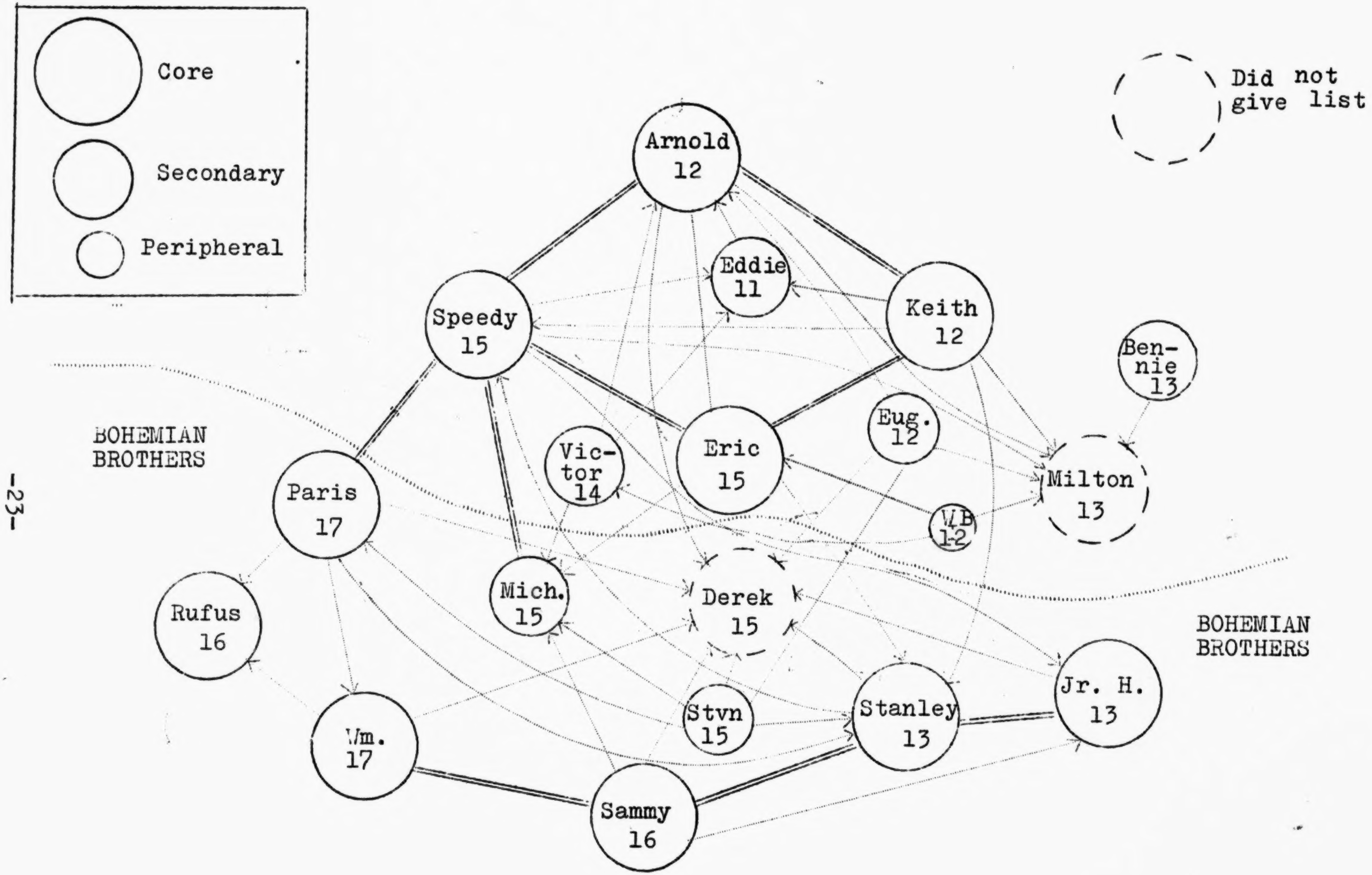

Core
Secondary
Peripheral
Did not give list
Arnold 12
Eddie 11
Keith 12
Speedy 15
Ben-nie 13
Eug. 12
Eric 15
Vic-tor 14
Milton 13
W.B 12
Paris 17
BOHEMIAN BROTHERS
Mich. 15
Derek 15
Rufus 16
BOHEMIAN BROTHERS
Jr. H. 13
Stanley 13
Stvn 15
Wm. 17
Sammy 16

Fig. 4-4. Hang-out pattern for the Cobras.

The history of the Cobras has been outlined in Figure 4-2. The most recent revolution discussed above is not the only one; as one can see, the groups frequently form and reform, even though the core hang out groups remain the same.

Structure of the Thunderbirds. Figure 4-5 shows the structure of the Thunderbirds, following the information of the hang out question. There are two leaders: Boot and Roger. It is not common to have two co-extensive leaders as evenly balanced as these two; it is possible here because they are functionally differentiated. Boot is the verbal leader; he excells in all of the speech events discussed below; Roger is the non-verbal leader who says comparatively little in the group. His method of control is best illustrated by the events of our first outing with the Thunderbirds--a trip to the Interstate Park on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River. Boot led the boys in all kinds of group activities--baseball, hiking, joking, sounding, eating; Roger simply disappeared. He returned eventually with some fishing line, which he had untangled, a hook, which he had found, and some bait, which he had borrowed. He went off to the river to fish, and all the boys immediately rushed off to watch Roger and wait for a turn.

It can be observed in this diagram that the leaders of the group have many contacts with individuals outside the group, and that many members do not mention anyone outside the group at all.

The Thunderbirds have also gone through some formal reorganizations, partly under the influence of adults; in fact, at the time we met them, they had just "dissolved". Boot and Roger had alternately been president; for the rest, a central core which can easily be identified. There is a junior group, again centered about a younger brother--Roger's brother, Donald. There are also marginal members, and a number of individuals who are not allowed to play with the Thunderbirds because of their parents' attitude. As mentioned in Chapter II, the exact enumeration of 1390 Fifth Avenue allowed us to place the Thunderbirds against the entire population, and Figure 2-2 shows how the non-Thunderbirds are clearly differentiated from the peer-group members. These non-members are influenced by different forces which isolate them from the dominant peer group; some go to parochial school, and are under stricter discipline; some are not allowed to play outside at all, but are kept entirely at home by their parents. In general, these isolated individuals or lames, are governed by a strong family which is very much concerned with detaching them from peer-group influence.

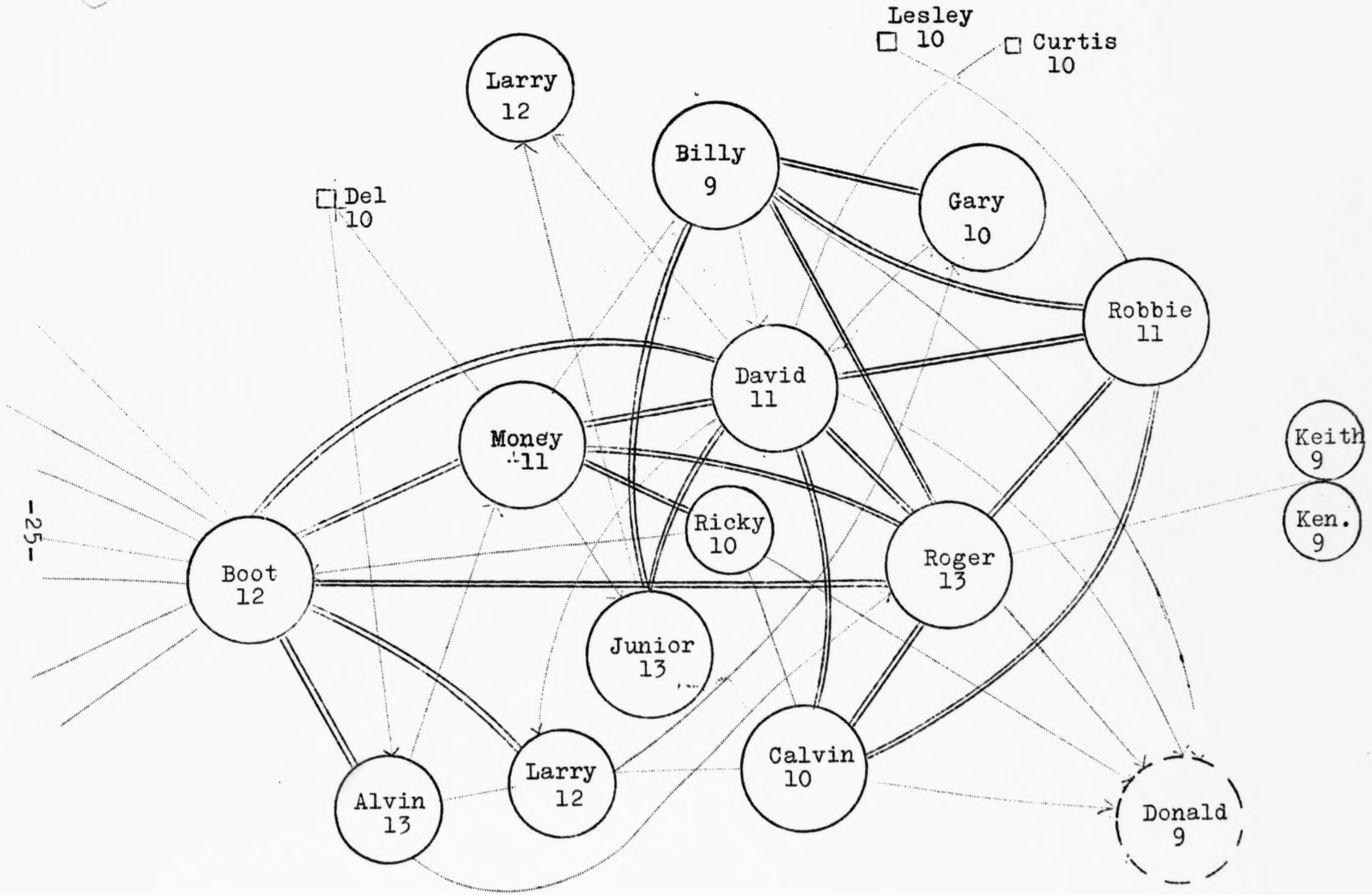

Lesley
10
Curtis
10
Larry
12
Billy
9
Gary
10
Del
10
Robbie
11
David
11
Money
11
Keith
9
Ken.
9
Ricky
10
Roger
13
Boot
12
Junior
13
Calvin
10
Larry
12
Alvin
13
Donald
9

Fig. 4-5. Hang-out pattern for the Thunderbirds (partial)

4.1.3. Family structure of the peer groups. From our interviews with individual peer-group members, we obtained reasonably complete information on the family backgrounds of the groups studied, and this information can be supplemented by the direct observations of Mr. Lewis. We were interested in the following questions:

a) Whether there is a father or stepfather at home.
b) To what extent he participates in the family life (including "who does the whippin'" in the family).
c) Who works in the family--father, mother, or other adult?

Our information is not as complete as if we had carried out these interviews in the home. But the dominant pattern is extremely clear, as shown in Table 4-1. Of the core members of the Jets, we find only two of fourteen who come from families with father and mother both present, and these two are brothers from the same family. But of the secondary members, seven out of fourteen come from such intact home. The same situation prevails among the Cobras. Only three out of twelve core members come from intact homes, and of the remainder, the information we have shows four out of six with mother and father both living at home.

In general, then, we can say that the peer group is characterized by a core group from families with the male absent, for one reason or another, and a female head. On the whole, the Cobras and Jets show about 50 ^{o}/o of their members from such family types, and so conform quite closely to the general norm for Central Harlem, where 50.4 ^{o}/o of persons under 18 were living with both parents according to the 1960 Census (BASR 1964). On the other hand, two-thirds of the lames interviewed in the VDC series were living with both parents. The lames therefore represent a population biased towards a particular end of the cultural spectrum, and the peer groups we have studied are more characteristic of Central Harlem as a whole. Within the peer groups, we see that there may be a connection between type of family structure and centrality in the vernacular culture, but much larger studies of many peer groups would be necessary to confirm this suggestion.

4.1.4. Values of adolescent sub-culture. We have already discussed previously some of the value systems connected with lower class culture in general. As far as adolescent culture patterns are concerned, it is clear there is a strong, focal concern with belonging, a sense of solidarity with the group; the importance of group membership cannot be overestimated.

We spoke above of the obligation which the peer groups impose of coming when summoned to fight in defense of a group. There is another obligation much more basic, which is simply *to be with* the group. To hang out with a group means to be on the street, or at the hang out--in a pool hall, a candy store, a vacant apartment, a hallway--when the other members are there. A member of a Puerto Rican group once defined a friend as someone who when you say to him, let's go somewhere, ~~he~~ goes with you. As far as we can see, there are no excuses and other business has no standing. That is not to say that everyone is always together; but to be a part of the group and the culture, one must be out on the street almost every day.[2] Most importantly, deliberate desertion of the group is a rank offense which is not forgotten or forgiven. For example, John Lewis was with the Jets at a New Year's Eve Party; he left at one point and promised to return, but could not do so. This fact rankled very deeply in the minds of the Jets and they referred to it many times in a later group session.

The most striking example of the power of the group to enforce behavior was shown when we attempted to gather Larry, Jessie and Vaughn--a close-knit subsection of the "six best fighters" for a final group session. Larry and Jessie came in very late from Jamaica, where their family had moved. Vaughn finally joined us in the Microbus, and stated quite definitely that he could not come because he had to go with his mother to buy a leather [jacket]. We accepted this, but Larry and Jessie refused to accept it. They began a loud, highly emotional form of LOUDING. Repeating over and over, "You got to come! . . . We ain't never comin' here again if you don't come! You got to come!" Vaughn sat and refused for twenty minutes under this incessant, penetrating, ear-splitting, verbal attack. Then he said simply, "Wait here, I'll put a note on the door", and finally joined us for the rest of the day. We have never seen a more striking example of the power of the peer group to enforce compliance in the face of other,seemingly compelling, obligations.

If the sense of belonging and solidarity is important in the group, it is also true that sex is a major concern of the adolescents. Sexual development in NNE follows a very different pattern from that of middle-class youth; first sexual intercourse takes place at a very early age, in pre-adolescent years, but social interaction with girls develops much later, and in many ways adolescent boys can be relatively naive about girls.[3] This is true, not only when it comes to sexual play before intercourse, but also in regard to the boys' knowledge of girls' attitudes and influences. Our study is limited to boys, as far as youth is concerned; but in one long interview with the Danger Girls, it appeared the girls see themselves as actively directing the boys for their purposes. The boys, on the other hand, speak of the girls as sexual objects who must be deceived, and the verbal skills which are developed reflect this approach (see 4.2 below).

In this respect, NNE certainly does not differ from other adolescent cultures, and we believe that this pluralistic ignorance is a characteristic of adolescent culture in general.

4.1.5. Afro-American cultural patterns. There are a wide range of behavior patterns characteristic of NNE speakers which are simply different from any white groups. Many of these differences are simply unknown to the general population--that is, whites do not know about the pattern and Negroes do not know that the whites do not know. In some ways, the existence of such absolute cultural markers has great importance for an understanding of the lack of communication between the groups, and we will therefore give some examples in detail, utilizing items of vocabulary which are not part of systematic linguistic structure. In Chapter III we have presented the more systematic, grammatical correlates of NNE membership, and in section 4.2 below we will explore those functional aspects of the use of language which are characteristic of NNE.

(1) 'Mother-wit'. For whites, the term, mother-wit is unknown, or exists only as an obsolete expression in the dictionary. For middle-aged and Southern Negroes, this term is exactly equivalent to common sense. Although some whites in the South may use it, inquiries have failed to establish such a fact. Yet for Negroes, the term is used over and over again in family life. In one striking incident during the SSENYC study, we interviewed a woman who had been classified as white by us and by previous interviewers; yet she freely volunteered the term mother-wit as equivalent to common sense. Towards the end of the interview, she said that she had had Negro friends when she was a child; and plainly added, without any hesitation, that her

family was "part Negro". But because the interviewer had been viewing her as white, and because no other linguistic or physical trait identified her as a Negro, this statement went literally unheard until the tapes were transcribed.

Although the term *mother-wit* is used frequently by Negroes, no whites we interviewed had any knowledge of the term nor did any Negroes interviewed know that it was a purely Negro term. This mutual ignorance shows that there has been no communication between white and black in a semantic area of great importance in general American culture.

The term is rapidly going out of use among Negro speakers; one evidence of its obsolescence can be seen in answers to the question, "Can a man have *mother-wit*?" A negative answer shows, of course, that the speaker has lost his native grasp of the term, since the original meaning of *mother-* here is 'original' or 'native'--as in *mother-liquor*, not 'female parent'.

(2) '*Ashy*'. In the wintertime, there is a tendency for many persons' skin to show dryness; the skin of Negroes tends to look grey when this happens. This is *ashy* skin for NNE speakers--a term which is also used very frequently in family life. Mothers teach their children to rub "lotion", "grease" or 'Vaseline' on their skins to prevent them from becoming *ashy*. Whites do not know the meaning of the term, nor this simple fact about Negro hygiene, nor do Negroes know that whites do not know. Thus, one white college student who had roomed for four years with a Negro, knew nothing about this, and thought perhaps that lotion was rubbed on the skin in the summertime. A striking case of communicative failure occurred when two Negro boys in a reform school kept taking Vaseline from the medicine cabinets; they were severely punished by the white administrator, who was sure they were using it for pederasty. The boys never thought of telling him why they needed the Vaseline, since they could not believe that the white man did not know what they wanted it for; and refused to believe that he did not know when they were told that this was the case.

(3)'*The rock says powww*!!!! When NNE boys give us narratives of personal experience, we observe a striking difference from WNS in the verb which designates non-verbal sounds and gestures. For WNS speakers, things *go X* when they hit, splash, bang or miss. Rocks or bullets can *go* "whooossh!". But for NNE speakers, the corresponding verb is *say*:

> ...and Calvin th'ew a rock;
> I was lookin' and--uh--
> and--uh--and Calvin th'ew a rock.
> It oh--it almost hit me.

And so I looked down to get another rock.
--say "ssh"!
an' it pass me.
I say, "Calvin, I'm bust your head for that."
Calvin stuck his head out.
I th'ew the rock,
and the rock went up,
I mean--went up--
came down,
and say [slap!]
and smacked him in the head
and his head busted.

[Boot, 12, T-Birds, #365]

The verb *say* is also used in referring to the actions of animate subjects in producing non-verbal sounds. Thus in a narrative of a fight with "the baddest girl in the neighborhood", we have

and this girls says,
"Where's the candy?"
I said,
"I don't have it."
She says, "Powww!!"

[26, Trenton, N.J., #311]

Similarly, we have a narrative of Speedy, president of the Cobras:

...Then all the guys start hollerin'
"You bleedin', ,
you bleedin'!
Speedy, you bleedin'!"
So I say [gesture] like that
Then I kep' on fightin'

[15, Cobras, #477]

This use of *say* to correspond to WNS *go* is even more marked when we note that WNS can use *go* for actual quotations of verbal material, to indicate a special affective quality of the speech act:

...They were beatin' the shit outa this guy.
And you know what they do,
They say--
He didn't move,
he was out;
his head was all spoilt--
and they go,
"He's dead,
He's dead!"
So he moves,
and they say,
"No, he's alive!"
And they jumped on 'im again...

[15, Inwood, #693]

(4) *Nicknames*. The pattern of nicknames in Harlem is distinctly different from the nicknames of the surrounding white culture. As far as the central peer groups' culture is concerned, we find no *Als*, *Daves*, *Bobs*, *Jacks*, *Sams*, *Joes*. We do have *Alvin*, *Albert*, and *Alfred*; *David*; *Robert* and *Robbie*; *Sammie*; and *Joseph*. The name *Jim* is not used as a nickname, but rather as a general appellative, as in: *you got to be cool, Jim*. In this usage, *Jim* can be used for any individual but we do not find the WNS equivalents; *Mac*, *Bud*, *Jack*.

The use of *Robert*, *Joseph*, *James*, etc., is not an act of formality on the part of NNE members. These are simply their names. In many cases, we have witnessed the direct correction of a white-style nickname applied to a Negro boy.

Staff member: You're Joe...?
JG: Joseph.

Because the pattern of white nicknames is rejected, it does not follow that NNE members do not use nicknames. First of all, they do use diminutives freely.

KC: Your name Billy or William?
WG: That's too out of style. Billy. I don't like William, man.

Furthermore, we find an extraordinary proliferation of nicknames other than modifications of the Christian name. Thus, among the Jets, we have:

Given name	Nickname
David	Peaches
Charles	Turkey, Feet
Laundro	Roach
Martin	Its
Melvin	Rip
James	Poochie
James	Pint
William	Deuce
Ulysses	Sonny
Sylvester	Champ

Other names are derived from clipped versions of last names. James Labell is usally "Bell", Richard Morales is "Rel".

A great many members create nicknames for themselves which claim some special status, but other members may not use this nickname in referring to them. Thus Bell says "They call me '*Iceman*'", but no one has been heard referring to him by this name.

The name *Junior* is very common, and it often happens that we have several *Juniors* or *Junies* to cope with. In the Jets, there is *Jessie* who is called *Junior*, and there is *John* who is called *Junior*. In addition, there is a *Fat Junior* whom we have not been able to identify.

A number of first and last names undergo a variety of phonological processes which carry them quite a distance from their underlying forms, and are therefore extremely difficult for outsiders to identify. One of the most striking examples is the boy we have identified as *Rednall*. His full first name is *Reginald*. The final *-d* is always deleted, and the [ɨ] usually vocalized, so that we frequently get [rɛǰɨnɔ·] But more frequently, the interior [ɨ] is dropped, and the [ǰ] loses its affricate quality to become a palatal stop [ɟ], yielding [rɛɟnɔ·]. The [ɟ] often assimilates to a regular [d], in the position of the [ǰ], as suggested by the spelling *Rednall* that we have used. But the last syllable is occasionally dropped, and the final stop devoiced, yielding [rɛd̥] which is heard by most people as "Ret".

It is possible that the distinctive pattern of nicknames used by NNE members is partly conditioned by a desire to avoid the common clipped nicknames used by Southern whites. But it may be simply a group characteristic parallel to the preferences which other ethnic groups show for distinctive first names. We also find in Negro families a characteristic range of given names. In our adult series we find *Willie Ruth Ellebe*, *Johnnie May*--characteristic Southern names, while names such as Denise are characteristic for Northern Negro adolescent girls.

4.1.6. *Black nationalism*. It has been mentioned several times that the Cobras gradually became more deeply involved in the ideology and organization of black nationalism. This movement is stronger in Harlem than in many other ghetto areas, but in general, we can say it is becoming an increasingly important part of the Negro community. As far as adults are concerned, our random survey shows that relatively few adult residents of Central Harlem took an actively militant position in 1966 or 1967, or are deeply familiar with the details of Muslim lore. At the same time, it is significant that we received an absolutely uniform response to the question "If you were going to be born again, what color would you like to be?" Not one of our respondents said "white", and it appears to us that this might not have been the case fifteen years ago.

In the case of the Cobras, who became the Bohemian Brothers and then a part of the Nation of Islam, we had an opportunity to observe the full impact of this religious pattern upon an adolescent group.

When we first met the Cobras, a great many members were concerned with nationalist questions, and considered the eating of pork as absolutely taboo. In the course of six months, we observed the development of many important verbal patterns which are discussed in some detail below in section 4.2.5. In our final group session with the Bohemian Brothers, the members showed an immersion in Muslim thinking that went beyond anything that they had done before. Members habitually addressed each other as *Belove'*. Their dietary habits, at least for this group session (and probably for our benefit) had reached an extreme. John Lewis informed us that our original plan to provide pizza and beer was unsuitable. So we settled on one of the few acceptable foods: lettuce and tomato sandwiches on whole wheat bread. Twenty-four sandwiches were made up by KC, and no other staff member touched the food. When the sandwiches were brought in, a crisis arose because mayonnaise had been used: one of the Brothers said that mayonnaise had eggs in it, and eggs were from chickens, and chickens were meat, and he didn't eat meat. Another member condemned eggs as being "a food within a food". However, the sandwiches were finally eaten.

Membership in the Nation of Islam involved the acquisition of occult or "heavy" knowledge and members were very sensitive to the possibility that we were trying to steal this knowledge. Such knowledge involves a large body of mythological lore concerning the origin of various races, the creation of the white man, and the approaching apocalypse which was to take place on July 4, 1966. There were a number of warnings issued by the Brothers to JL on the danger of "falling" from grace, directed because of his association with whites which was no longer tolerated at this point.

We will not enter here into a detailed description of the ritual chants or *heavy knowledge* of the Bohemian Brothers, but reserve that discussion for 4.2.5, concerned with *rifting*. In this introduction, it may be helpful to stress three aspects of the value system connected with this ideology which have important consequences for linguistic development.

(a) *Black is good and white is bad*. This general tenet of Black Muslim lore accounts for any undesirable aspect of behavior by Negroes, such as drinking, gambling or stealing, as being learned from whites. The Bohemian Brothers, who talked to us freely in previous group sessions, did not address any white member of the staff directly during the last session, and after this meeting, all contact with the Brothers ended for some time.

(b) *Brothers should not fight with one another*. It has been noted in studies of crime in ghetto areas that the great majority of acts of violence are committed against Negroes by Negroes. The fighting of the peer groups, both in single pairs and gang rumbles, was directed primarily against other Negroes, and occasionally against Puerto Ricans. The nationalist position ran directly counter to this pattern. Those with knowledge of their own selves were not supposed to fight with each other; Brother did not fight with Brother. We find this point of view reflected in the following by a Bohemian Brother:

> ...this particular time I happened to ask the girl to go with me, you know? So she says, "Yeah." So he rappin' his gang down to her every day. I get out of school, I see this cat with his arm around her, you know? ...so I didn't say nothing. I just lay, you know? So I was gonna wait to see if she was gonna tell me about it, you know? So I walked up to the guy, say,"Well-um-look here fella, you know you messin' with my chick, you know?" He says, "So what about it?" So he was a brother, too, you know? So I say, "You a Brother?" He say, "Yeah." "So all right, I'm not gonna attack you know. I'm gonna wait for you to get you with the hands. I don't want--I'm a wait till you hit me." He said "O.K." Took off his coat like a big man, you know? I had my gun in my pocket. I took out my gun. I gave it to my girlfriend. I took off my coat. I stand up there, you know? So he swung, hit me in my jaw. I say, "Tha's boss, Brother. Le's get with the hands now."
>
> [16, "Arbar", Cobras, # 504]

Whether or not this ideal was carried out, it is a formal fact that one set of overt norms was replaced by another, and there is no question that this substitution is a positive force in promoting the social integration of the community.

(c) Knowledge and book learning is highly evaluated. It will be seen that there is very little connection between the vernacular culture and the verbal skills needed to succeed in school. Peer-group members read very poorly as a rule, and they do not use reading in their daily life. In section 4.3 below, we will explain the status of reading to peer group status, and show the concrete evidence for this irrelevance. We will contrast with this the attitude towards learning which develops in the vernacular culture; the full quotations from the interview with peer-group members given in sections 4.2.5 and 4.. will document the strongly positive attitude of Black Nationalism towards learning and literacy.

One of the most striking aspects of the Black Muslim culture is shown in the use of attributes--Muslim names which replace the given or slave name. Typical attributes of the

Bohemian Brothers--Abdul, Akbar, Aki, Quahab, Rahane, Tumar --are given above. There is a great deal of phonological confusion and variation in form for these attributes, since they are rarely spelled, and the norms of the group do not permit them to be specified by careful inquiry. The word *attribute* itself appears as [æstribju] and the names themselves undergo wide phonological transformations, like so many other words characteristic of the non-literate culture.

Nationalist thinking has also penetrated the pre-adolescent community, though details become increasingly vague as we move to younger age levels. In recent group sessions with the Thunderbirds, some two years after our first contact with the group, we found that the verbal leader of the group, Boot, had acquired a certain amount of heavy knowledge. It must be remembered that the Thunderbirds are located on the corner of 115th Street and Fifth Avenue, on the edges of the Cobras' territory. We even found evidence of the penetration of the Nationalists thinking in a very diluted form in a small group session with two eight-year-olds:

Gregory: An 'ey talk about Alláh.
CR: Oh yeah? (eah.) What do they say about Alláh?
Gregory: Alláh--Alláh is *God*.
CR: And what else?
Gregory: I don' know the res'.
Leon: Alláh is God, Alláh is the only God, Alláh--
Gregory: Alláh's the *son* of God.
Leon: But he can't--can he make magic?
Gregory: Nope.
Leon: I know who can make magic.
Gregory: God. . the *real* one.
CR: Who can magic?
Leon: The son of po'k--I'm sayin'--po'k chop God.
only the po'k chop God.
Gregory: [chuckles]

The *pork chop God* is the Christian God, here identified as the God of *pork chops*--that is, Negroes who are immersed in traditional Southern culture, imposed on them by the white man. It is curious that Leon and Gregory have picked up this derogatory reference to that God, but still look upon Allah as a kind of make-believe God. The real God is still the Christian God of the older generation, pork chops or no, whereas those who are playing the Muslim game are still playing a game. We will see further reflections of the game-like character of the Muslim ideology in 4.2.5.

4.1.7. Delinquent sub-culture. Some of the behavior patterns of the Jets and Cobras are plainly related to that aspect of lower-class culture which has adopted norms different from or deviating from the standard middle-class norms. A simple example of this is a difference between the question (a) "What was the worst fight you ever saw?" and (b) "What was the best fight you ever saw?" For the peer-group members, the meanings of these questions are: (a) In what fight did people perform most ineptly? Where there was the least action? (b) In what fight was there the most physical damage, the most action? Middle-class respondents will interpret question (a) with the same meaning which peer-group members give to question (b). This difference must certainly illustrate a fundamental difference in the values attributed to fighting and violence.

One can also ask peer group members "Who's the best thief?" a question which would be interpretable but odd to a middle-class subject. One could ask the middle-class subject "Who is the worst thief?", with the same meaning, but peer-group members would interpret this question in an opposed sense meaning "Who is the least effective thief, who steals the least?"

By a delinquent sub-culture, we mean a group which wants norms which are different from and deviate from the norms of the standard culture. There is considerable disagreement as to whether peer-group members actually have a deviant set of norms, or whether they are merely expressing other values since they are blocked from the paths which follow the middle-class or standard values. We do not attempt here to decide this point, but merely register the fact that the explicit peer-group attitudes towards stealing, fighting, drugs, sex, working, and even family are different from the values which are put forward in the school system. In fact, the values which the peer group endorses are usually the exact opposite of those which are endorsed by teachers and in school texts. In this respect, the NNE peer groups are not radically different from other peer groups from a lower-class culture, but it seems worthwhile to specify the particular opposition as a sub-set of "delinquent" values.

As we shall see in 4.2, the patterns of verbal interaction in the peer groups--what they actually say to each other--cannot be understood without referring to a permanent, implicit opposition of "good" and "bad" values. The verbal play, insults, challenges, and jokes of the Jets and Cobras take much of their meaning from this frame of reference.

There are six main "bad" areas of behavior in which peer group members may excel:

1. fighting
2. stealing
3. cursing
4. drinking
5. drugs
6. sex

One can set up more abstract foci of value, as Walter B. Miller does. "Kicks" for example, are to be found in all of these forms of behavior. Toughness shows up primarily in fighting. "Heart" is shown in fighting, stealing, and also in taking dares. "Cool" can be demonstrated in all of them. But such abstractions are not the points of reference for most of the verbal play and obscure references that we find in the conversation of the Jets and Cobras. Delinquent behavior is exemplified in these six areas. We can construct an impressionistic account of a "good" adolescent boy in this community from the content of the Jets and Cobras remarks to each other. The "good" boy does not fight, or stays close to the rules of fair fighting; he does not steal, which is against the law; he does not use obscene language, especially in front of women; he does not drink, or drinks only beer now and then; he does not take drugs, and in particular does not get high on reefer; he takes girls out and engages in heavy petting, but he does not have sexual intercourse with a girl unless he intends to marry her: he respects women. Someone who is "bad" is a dangerous and effective fighter: he pays no attention to rules of a fair fight; he is a daring and successful thief; he pays no attention to any taboos on language, even in front of older women, and he has a good command of invective; he can handle large amounts of whiskey, and will drink anything else in sight including port; he gets high on reefer, heroin and cocaine; gets all the women he wants by a bold and direct approach, but has no personal regard for women at all. This portrait will be developed in greater detail in the account of toasts in 4.2.2.

If someone seems to be looking for a fight or acting tough, a good way to put him down or challenge him to a fight is to say, "What, you think you *bad* an' shit?" [Larry, Jets, #560]

One of the main tactics of verbal play among peer group members is to reject whatever is going on at the moment in favor of one of these six areas of *bad* behavior. In one Jet group session, Rednall says:

> ..let's get five dollars and get a bag.

He is promptly rebuked by Rel:

> You ain't gettin' no *bag*, man.

[That is, a five dollar bag of marijuana cigarettes.] Rel's rebuke is equivalent to the mock reprimand which Stanley hurls at Rednall, "You got to be *good*, Rednall!" But Rel's remark is also to be taken as putting Rednall down: as saying that Rednall is not able, in fact, to get a bag. All of this of course, is not "serious": nor is it entirely a joke; it is at some unspecified level of seriousness which is difficult to fix entirely. Such exchanges can lead to fights: but again the level of seriousness of the fight is hard to fix.

One activity which might have been listed, as a seventh area of bad behavior, is gambling; but current middle-class norms against gambling are too weak to consider that playing the horses or the numbers is an effective defiance of these norms. The Jets and Cobras play cards a great deal, usually not for money. Almost every game includes accusations of cheating, and in fact, members do cheat each other, or try to do so. Again, the level of seriousness of both cheating and accusations is hard to specify. In the first group session with the Cobras, beginning with a blackjack game, we find a typical exchange:

Eric: Hey, Derek man, I'm not goin' for that. You know that?

Derek: Go for what, man?

Eric: ...the cards.
Speedy: Eh! You better dig on them cards.
Derek: Whatcha talkin' 'bout, baby?

Junior: He over there diggin' on the cards; he tryin' to cheat.
Derek: Aww, man, what is y'all talkin' 'bout, man?

Junior: A little cheatin'.

Derek: Y'all callin' me a cheater, now. Right?

Junior: Yeah!

Eric: Now if you catch twenty-one...
Speedy: [chuckles]
Junior: [whispers] You're busted.

Derek: Now you know me; [chuckle] I ain't gonna catch that kind of...

In this kind of exchange, it is difficult to distinguish cheating from playing at cheating. In school, a great deal of the conflict between teacher and student may begin with exchanges at this level, but it can become more serious when authority is openly defied.

The game of playing at being "bad" is not entirely verbal. But the verbal play which leads up to fights looms larger than the fights themselves, especially in narratives about fights. One of the best exponents of the NNE value system is Larry of the Jets. In his individual interview, he told three stories about fights he had been in--in all three he played the same "bad" part. He shows himself as expert in deliberately provoking a fight; and then makes a mock claim of innocence which no one is expected to believe. Two of these stories are analyzed in detail in 4.8, dealing with narrative analysis. Here we may cite another to illustrate the value system of being "bad". The arrangement by individual clauses is one which we will use later on in our analysis of narratives.

(Did you ever fight a cat who was bigger than you?)
Yeah, plenty a times.
(When?)
I had one with a cat in my school last week. (X) Yeah
(What happened?)
A big white dude you know,
We was in the auditorium an' shit for what you call the assembly, an' shit.
An' the white dude happened to be sittin' in my seat.
So I axed him to get up, nicely and shit.
An you know them old whities, man, they think they bad,
(Laughs)
But you know, they can't kick no ass, an' shit.
(That's true..)
So I said, "Eh, whyntchou get out of my seat, man?"
So he didn't say a word, you know,
He sat there like he was dumb an' shit.
So I said, "Eh man, I'm gonna axe you one more time "Please get out of my seat."
So he wouldn't move.
So I grabbed him
And pushed him out of my seat

And he came back
an' hit me dead in my jaw, man,
an tha' started it.
I beat the shit out of that mother-fucker.
I knocked him over one of them chairs.
Teachers came up
And' they grabbed me soon as I knocked him over.
Shit--I fucked one of those teachers up, man,
Went after that mother-fucker
An' he was movin',
He was movin'!
I ain't bull-shittin'.
He was movin' back
An' I was tryin' my best to catch that bad mother-fucker! [Larry, 16, Jets, #560]

It is legitimate to ask whether Larry is in fact as "bad" as he appears in his own accounts: whether his actions in a real situation match his stories. Usually only fragmentary evidence is available on such an important question. But we are fortunate in having an almost perfect record of an incident in which Larry was placed in sudden confrontation with an adult in authority. John Lewis was giving Gray's Oral Reading Test to several Jets, sitting on the front stoop of a brownstone house.

Larry: Civil--naa.. civil di-

JL: Can't get it?

Larry: Civil-- No.

JL: Civ-- civ--

Larry: Civil--nation. . .civilized nation. A'right.

Larry: Civilized nation.
Man: Don't hang on that stoop there.

At this point, a man with a Puerto Rican accent approached the group on the steps. In the argument that followed, every word that Larry said is well recorded, since he was wearing the lavaliere microphone. The man, who turned out to be the landlord, is not as well recorded, since there is a great deal of strident overlap. John Lewis is also arguing much of the time, but only some of his remarks are reproduced here.

Larry: ...Say whaa--
Man: x x x hang on that stoop there.
JL: We havin' a test...

Larry: Eh, we havin' a tes' man!
Man: You can have it in the side in there...

Larry: No, I'm havin' it-- *Why can't I have it here*?

Man: Because I don' want it!

Larry: Eh, well, tha's you' business [bɪd̥nɪs], I'm havin' it.

{JL: Why not, man--this isn't your house is it
{Man: look--

{Man: x x and this *is* my house.
{Larry: So what, this ain't your stoop,

{Larry: You don't own this stoop!
{Landlord: Yes this is my stoop.
{JL: There's nothin' wrong with havin' a tes', is there?

{Landlord: Awri', have it in the *side*.
{Larry: Eh, *dig that*--
{JL: A reading tes' x x

Larry: Then why can't we have it right here?

{Larry: We ain't botherin' nobody!
{Landlord: I don't want it!

Up to this point, John Lewis and Larry are still being fairly quiet, even polite. John Lewis (who can be even tougher than Larry) is going out of his way to reason with the man, who failed to identify himself at the outset or make his request in a polite or reasonable form. Larry is himself being polite within his framework, as he now indicates.

Larry: Well, tha's yo' business, I'm sorry, man!

Landlord: Oh you're sorry!

Larry: Dig that, I'm sorry!

This "sorry" is a kind of provocation. Being sorry for the landlord's trouble is an ironic way of indicating that you will not comply with his request. The landlord then resorts to a relatively trite form of blustering.

Landlord: You wanna--you're the tough guy, aintcha?

Larry: Yeah, well I'm not no tough guy, y'unnastan'?

Landlord: You're actin' that way, 'cause I'm talk to you in a *nice* way.

Larry: Yeah, well I'm talkin' to *you* in a nice way!

It is important to realize that this is not a retreat on Larry's part. He refuses to act the role of someone who openly claims to be "bad", but his politeness is plainly intended as a warning. If he has been nice up to now, the message reads, don't press him further because he will not be able to be "nice" then. The landlord however does press the point, and both Larry and John Lewis try to reason with him.

Landlord: This ain't a bus station..this ain't a bus station.
Larry: So ain't nobody complainin' but you, man!

Landlord: Yeah, because I don' nobody hang round my stoop...
Larry; All these people been comin' in and outa this buildin' an' they ain't sayin' nothin'.

Landlord: I don' wan' nobody to hangin' on this stoop.
JL: But he's not doin' nothin' man!

Landlord: You don' live in here. Even the tenants in the house I don' allow.
JL: Tha's not the point man. You can't make your house--

At this point, Larry decides to take a firm stand. He has finally realized that there is no point in arguing with the landlord who has mistakenly taken their reasonable attitude as a sign of weakness. The landlord is a type who even tries to tell the tenants where they can sit or stand. This confrontation shows Larry quite as tough as he has portrayed himself.

Larry: Eh--but you can't make me move! No.
Landlord: I can't? Oh sure I can!

Larry: Oh I'll tell you what. You try to make me move, y'unnastan'?

JL: You get a cop.
Landlord: Now just a minute.
JL: You get a cop.
Larry: You get a cop.

The landlord is in no position to use violence himself. JL and Larry force him into claiming that he will go get a cop, even though he evidently does not want to.

Larry: You get anybody you wanna!
Landlord: Awri'!

{Larry: An' I'll be sittin' right here, y'unnerstan'?
{Landlord: O.K.

Now Larry utters a direct threat for the first time.

Larry: An' I'll betchou one thing, if they mess with me you better move outa this city, right quick!

Larry's threat sets off more intense reactions. The landlord makes a speech, and John Lewis tries to calm Larry down (a number of his remarks are overlaid by Larry's voice and are lost).

{Landlord: Don't try to push me aroun' I don't fuck to
{Larry: Eh look here, my man--

{Landlord: scare you..nobody.
{Larry: I DON' CARE, Y'UNNASTAN'!
{JL: Larry, don't x x x

The landlord now takes up the idea of getting a cop, but even with plenty of encouragement from the Jet side it still takes some time for him to move off.

{Landlord: I think I'll get a cop, y'unnastan'.
{JL: I think I'll get a cop. Let 'im get a cop.

Larry: You go get your cop, y'unnastan', and I'll be right here, my man! Go get 'im Go on and get 'im, what you waitin' on?

Landlord: So don' try to be fresh.

Larry: I mean get the fuck outa here, I don' wanna hear yo' bullshit, you unnastan'!

Landlord: My bullshit--huh?

Larry: Dig that!

Landlord: Jus' wait a secon', I'm gonna show you.

Larry: Well you do that.

JL: Go ahead and git somethin'.

The landlord finally moves off. Larry's remark "I'll be right here" is the ritual statement made in setting up an appointment for a fight between peers. The Jets evaluate the situation as they hold the field. Peaches, Larry's younger brother, is heard first

{Peaches: That *did* it, man.
{JL: Goddam x x got killed out here. . .

Larry: That did it. Now we gonna have to do the *job* to him, now.

As one might expect, the landlord did not return. This particular scene does not show Larry and the Jets in a heroic light--the landlord was only one man, and a fairly small one--but it does show the kind of stress that adult society puts on the Jets in daily life. They were engaged in as constructive an undertaking as might be imagined--taking Gray's Oral Reading Test. The landlord, confident that he can exercise unlimited authority, orders them off without apology or explanation. It is not a new experience for adult authorities to harrass the Jets in this way. One of the favorite occupations of the Jets is flying pigeons which they buy, house and train themselves: landlords have torn down their coops, and forbidden them to use the tenement roofs. In this incident, one sees Larry putting to good use the same aggressive line which he reports in his narratives. It would be difficult to maintain that he is performing for the microphone: in the heat of the confrontation, the existence of the tape recorder becomes a very minor factor indeed. This is therefore important evidence in evaluating his self-report given below (4.8).

One aspect of the NNE endorsement of "bad" behavior appears in the special status of those who have been to reform school, or prison, and returned to the group. Having been in prison is definitely not a knock for our peer group members; on the contrary, it is assumed that anyone who has been "upstate" has acquired valuable experience. One of the leaders of the Cobras, "Booger", was sent up for sticking a razor in someone's face. It was mentioned above that many members (and the associated Danger Girls) were dissatisfied with Speedy's leadership. They looked forward to Booger's return--and a return to more violent action. It might follow that one could gain prestige by committing a crime so openly that arrest, conviction and sentencing would automatically follow. But it is also a matter of importance to be "slick"--to have the kind of intelligence referred to as "smarts" in the older terminology used above. No one is admired for being careless or stupid. But if someone who takes normal precautions is arrested and sent up, he inevitably gains stature as far as the NNE groups are concerned.

Given this set of values, it must be understood that the personality developed in the peer groups is not necessarily an attractive one in middle-class eyes. Readers of these pages may admire the Jets and Cobras for their style, their verbal abilities, and their indomitable defiance of oppressive authority. But from the point of view of the average teacher in junior high school, these qualities make them even more difficult for him to deal with. Given the methods the teacher is using, and his own cultural outlook, the Jets and Cobras will most likely appear as nasty, stupid and unpleasant ruffians. Indeed, adults in their own neighborhood consider the Jets and Cobras to be nothing but "hoodlums", and John Lewis's association with them made him suspect in the eyes of many adults.

It is sometimes assumed that teachers do not like their students because they do not know them well enough: that greater knowledge and understanding of the children in the class will automatically lead to better relations. We are not sure that this is the case. If the teachers in the local public schools knew what the Jets and Cobras do after school, and how they talk after school, they would probably like them less than they do now. The peer group culture we are studying here is diametrically opposed to gentlemanly and chivalrous deportment which is held up as a model in most schoolbooks. The peer group as a whole is utterly intractable as far as this type of socialization is concerned. That is not to say that the Jets and Cobras have no etiquette, no norms of politeness, no consideration for others. Every group must have such rules if face-to-face encounters are not to lead to insoluble conflicts. But the rules which are observed are not those of the school, and most teachers would have difficulty in recognizing them as rules at all. If the verbal skills and native resources of the NNE peer groups are to be used in school, we will need a different type of teacher than the traditional incumbent of the public schools.

We wish to make clear that we are not offering any "explanations" of deviant behavior or arguing that this frame of reference is the cause of delinquent acts. Nor are we making any statements about whether being "bad" is conceived of as being morally bad from the standpoint of members. It does not appear that the group as a whole takes any clear position on whether stealing someone's pocketbook is an evil act which injures someone else. The information here presented is a description of a frame of reference needed to understand the verbal behavior of the peer-group members: they continually refer to ways of being "good" and ways of being "bad"; and without committing themselves entirely to one or the other, give more status to a person who is "bad" than one who is good.

It is generally true of adolescent peer groups that they revolt against adult authority, and endorse values which are opposed to the dominant values of adult society.
Working-class adolescents admire train robbers, neighborhood gangsters, and big guys who stand up to the teacher; and this opposition of values affects many middle-class boys as well. We are not contending here that the values of being "bad" are

confined to NNE culture. However, it can be said that whenever such oppositions are strongly entrenched in the peer group, there will be resistance to the school system; and to the extent that teachers and texts strongly endorse the notion of being "good", to that extent the NNE adolescents are apt to reject both the form and the content of instruction. In the NNE sub-culture, there is a great deal of prestige in being "bad"--whether it is in fighting, stealing, or laying a great many girls. The over-all pattern may be more highly developed in NNE than in other sub-cultures, for the obvious reason that the society which is being defied has in fact oppressed this group more severely than any other. In the following two sections of this chapter, we will provide further documentation of the importance and effects of this opposition between "good" and "bad" in NNE.

4.2 Speech events in NNE

In the discussion of the preceding section 4.1, we have outlined some of the major values which characterize the vernacular culture, without any particular emphasis on those which center about language and speech. In this sub-section we will focus more sharply on those cultural patterns which directly affect the development of language   its use different environments. We will describe a number of speech events which are specific to NNE, and which show the standards of excellence for vernacular speakers. It will be evident that these standards are not the same as those that govern school language, and that good speakers on the street are not necessarily good speakers at school.

4.2.1. Singing. Singing is an obligatory activity for all of the NNE peer groups we have dealt with. Some of the white peer groups sing together, but their activity is sporadic and many groups simply do not sing together at all. When we say that singing is obligatory for NNE members, we mean that the social pressures compel everyone to participate in the activity whether he has any skill at this activity or not.

Many of our group sessions had the overt purpose of recording the group in a formal singing session. Thus we have video and audio tape recordings of singing by the Thunderbirds, the Jets, the Cobras and the Oscar Brothers. The Jets and the Cobras have official club songs which we will discuss below.

At the beginning of the group sessions, all of the tape recorders to be used were set up and in readiness; all that was necessary was to hang a lavaliere microphone around the neck of each member. But by various means the period of "setting-up" was enlarged to about twenty minutes, and during this period we obtained a level of speech activity which was even less focussed and more spontaneous than at any other time. The Thunderbirds would begin to sing, with the verbal leader Boot leading. One obtains such sequences as the following:

WL: What are you trying to do?
CR: I've got a mini-plug here.
Boot: [singing] a-waw-wa-waw-wa-waw-wa-wa
ba-baa-baa-ba.....

T-Birds: [singing] Ba-ba-baa-baa-ba......

WL: O.k...now plug it in.
Boot: [singing] Hip-ho-the Mary Joe

Money: [singing] Hip-ho-the Mary Joe
WL: The one you guys like best.

Boot: [singing and clapping] Hip-ho-the girl I know
WL: Put it up here right now

T-Birds: Hip-ho-the girl I know

This developed gradually into a more regular singing and clapping sequence, with Boot leading and all of the Thunderbirds backgrounding in unison:

Boot: Wo-wo-o-wee
T-Birds: Wo-wo-o-wee
Boot: The girls in the city
T-Birds: The girls in the city
Boot: Smell mighty pretty
T-Birds: Smell mighty pretty
Boot: The girls in the country
T-Birds: The girls in the country
Boot: Smell mighty funky
T-Birds: Smell mighty funky
Boot: I say a wo-woo-wee-ee
T-Birds Wo-woo-wee-wee
WL: That one is at seven and a half inches a second....

The obligatory nature of group singing is best illustrated by the behavior of Roger, the non-verbal leader. When the formal singing session began, Roger volunteered to do the announcing; he did this with considerable flourish and style, but he did not join in with the group. After two songs, Roger announced that he was going to sing. His voice was very bad and his singing was off-pitch. The rank-and-file Thunderbirds ran into the other room with their hands over their ears, barely suppressing their laughter. But Boot, Roger's co-leader, stood attentively in front of Roger through the entire song without a single smile. We interpret his behavior as respect for an obligatory performance which was necessary to maintain the equilibrium of the group.

When we turn our attention to the songs themselves, especially the official club songs, we can discriminate quite sharply between commercial culture and the indigenous verbal culture of the groups we are studying. The Jets, for example, have two distinct club songs, given on the following pages. One is "The Jets' Song" from "West Side Story".

1. The Jets' Song from West Side Story

When you're a Jet, you're a Jet all the way,
From your first cigarette to your last dyin' day.
When you're a Jet, let 'em do what they can,
You got brothers around, you're a family man.
You're never alone, you're never disconnected,
A home of your own when company's expected.
You're well protected.
Then you are set with the capital 'J'
Which you never forget till they put you away
When you're a Jet, you stay a JET.....

When you're a Jet you're a top cat in town,
You're the go middle kid with the heavyweight crown.
When you're a Jet, let 'em do what......

When you're a Jet, you're the swingingest thing,
Little boy, you're a man, little man you're a king.
The Jets were in the air,
So keep your noses hidden.
Hang a sign for every Puerto Rican,
A lousy chicken,
Here comes the Jets
Like a bat out of hell.
Someone gets in our way,
Some-a-don't feel so well,
But the whole, fuckin', everlovin' street.

2. The Jets' Song

In nineteen hundred and forty-one
When the mighty Jets had just begun
They was a knockin' windows,
Bustin' out doors,
Fuckin' all a the bitches and a-callin 'em whores.

AH SAY WAAHN! ON A GITTAAH POP
HAANH! ON A POOMPANG WAHNADA BOP

HAAH! When I was young,
In my pride,
I used to smoke my pot
And drink my wine.
Now I'm old,
Can't be bold,
Can't smoke my pot no more.

AH SAY WAAHN! ON A GITTAAH POP
HAANH! ON A POOMPANG WAHNADA BOP

HAAH! On the inky dinky,
Your mother stinky,
She wash her face
In a dirty slop sinky.

WAAHN! ON A HUPPA-DA-BA
HAANH! ON A POOMPANG WAHNADA BOP

HAAH! On a di- di- diner,
The big dick shiner,
Imogene Coca
The big ditty choker,
Handy handy,
The candy mandy,
Sid Caesar,
The titty squeezer,

WAAHN! ON A GITTAAH POP
HAANH! ON A POOMPANG WAHNADA BOP

HAAH! On da Amos 'n' Andy,
Black as tar,
Tryin' to git to heaven on a trolley car,
Trolley car broke,
Amos got choked,
And they all went to heaven in a rubber boat.

AH SAY WAAHN! ON A GITTAAH POP
HAANH! ON A POOMPANG WAHNADA BOP

Standin' on a da corner dressed in white
The mighty Jets was down to fight,
With their baggy pants, purple vests,
Kill more niggers than Elliot Ness.

AH SAY WAAHN! ON A GITTAAH POP
HAANH! ON A POOMPANG WAHNADA BOP.

The Jets like the commercial song and sing it with great gusto. However, it contrasts in style and contour with their own Jet song--which seems to be inherited with appropriate transformations from the continuous tradition of other street clubs. The principal values of lower-class and delinquent sub-culture, and many of the specific concerns of NNE culture, are reflected in the Jets' own song. It would be difficult to exaggerate the stylistic gulf which separates these two songs. The commercial song rhymes and scans. The text is an agile combination of many standard colloquial English idioms: Your last dyin' day, a family man, a home of your own, with a capital J, a top cat in town, bat out of hell, etc. The meter of the street song is less regular, the rhymes are wilder, and its poetic force is derived from unconventional succession and conjunction of concrete images.

The Jets appear in only two verses of their own song. Other verses present a series of seemingly disconnected images: first the self--the culture hero smoking pot and drinking wine appears, derogating himself: then the abstract mother-figure, insulted in the same ritual fashion as in sounding (see 4.2.3); next two mythical figures drawn from commercial television, Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca, endowed with larger-than-life sexual attributes; then the classic characters of the Uncle-Tom stereotype, Amos and Andy, on their way to heaven with suitable misadventures. As far as source material is concerned, the song draws heavily from commercial culture, transformed through the needs of rhyme, the whims of verbal play, and the themes of street culture. We observe the same processes operating in counting-out rhymes used by younger children, which overlap with this material. There is no attempt to construct a logical argument, to bind the text together: themes are referred to rather than argued. In this sense, the street song is a surrealist construction. As images succeed each other, the meaning of the conjunction is derived intuitively by the listener. On the other hand, the commercial song uses explicit arguments:

> When you're a Jet, let 'em do what they can,
> You got brothers around, you're a family man.

This is a direct statement of the claim of the Jets to group solidarity--that the primary duty of the Jets is to hang together. As noted above, members state that where the Jets are concerned, it is "one for all and all for one". This kind of abstraction does not occur in the street song; one searches in vain for such generalities. The vernacular song defies logical connectives, but we can isolate the cultural themes which are referred to, and put them into an explicit framework.

The chorus of the vernacular song shows the delight in verbal play characteristic of the street culture:

AH SAY WAAHN! ON A GITTAAH POP
HAANH! ON A POOMPANG WAHNADA BOP

The transcription in ordinary orthography is an attempt to express the force and energy of the chorus. Many of the lexical items are difficult to recognize: that is true for members as well as outsiders. But we can note three lexical items of considerable importance; guitar, poontang and bop referring to music, sex and fighting. Poontang is an older term for vagina which seems to be culturally specific to NNE.

When we review the Jets' song as a whole, we see a succession of references to the themes of lower-class and delinquent sub-culture, which we have summarized in section 4.1 as "bad" themes. A chart is perhaps the most revealing arrangement:

Verse	"Bad" themes	
1	fighting:	knockin' windows, bustin' out doors
	sex,	fuckin' all a the bitches
	insults	a-callin' 'em whores.
2	drugs	smoking pot
	alcohol	drinking wine
3	insults	your mother stinky, dirty, black
4	sex	big dick shiner, titty squeezer
6	dress	baggy pants, purple vests
	fighting	kill more niggers than Elliot Ness
Chorus	sex	poontang
	fighting	bop

The theme of fighting embodies two of Miller's "lower-class" values--heart and toughness--but these are too closely interconnected to make it worthwhile separating them. Heart in itself does not necessarily contradict standard middle-class values--it is not "bad" to have courage. But heart also implies a certain absence of compassion--someone who has heart is willing to insult, degrade and abuse others without being involved to the extent of taking their part in imagination, or sympathizing with them.

Note that the content of the West Side Story song emphasizes that aspect of the group culture which is acceptable and admired by middle-class culture: group solidarity, and pride in the personal status of being a Jet. These elements are indeed present in the Jets own view of the matter, but it is typical of commercial culture to have the group speak in just those terms which are comprehensible to middle class listeners. In this sense, the commercial song sentimentalizes the street culture, in showing only those themes which will arouse sympathy in the middle class audience. The Jets own song in being "bad" openly defies many values of middle class culture--including the value set on rational discourse.

The vernacular song also shows a prominent characteristic of urban folklore: in preserving a great many diverse elements from older cultures without integrating them with more recent themes. These elements survive when their meaning has long since been lost. For example, there is a jump rope rhyme: "Fun, fun/American gun/Eighteen hundred and ninety-one/". No one knows now what event in 1891 is referred to. In the Jets' song, elements from mass media are embedded: Elliot Ness, Imogene Coca and Sid Caesar, and, from an older generation, Amos 'n Andy. We find many such references in the long epic poems or toasts discussed below in 4.3.

There are two themes of the specific NNE culture which emerge strongly in the Jets' song. Both are negative; the products of the specific social and economic forces within the ghetto. One theme is hostility towards women, which appears even more strongly in the toasts. In the Jets' own song, we find fuckin' all the bitches and callin' them whores, and your mother stinky. The second theme is one of self-hatred, expressed as negative references to blackness and other physical characteristics of Negro people. We have noted above that this theme is muted today in the overt responses by adults to questions about race, but it survives in the adolescent and traditional folklore. It is significant that the Jets, who have much less "self-knowledge" than the Cobras, and who explicitly reject nationalism, preserve this theme so heavily in their song. The blackness of the mother's face is attacked in on the inky dinky; Amos 'n Andy are derogated as black as tar. The very preservation of Amos 'n Andy in the song recognizes the hostile stereotypes which white society has imposed on the Negro people. Finally, the last verse emphasizes again violence of Negroes directed against Negroes. The word nigger is used frequently by Jet members in exactly the sense intended here: Kill more niggers than Elliot Ness. It is used to denigrate other members of the community--people who have all the low-caste characteristics which the white society attributes to Negroes.

We also find reflected in the Jets' own song the phonological and grammatical properties discussed in section 3 of Volume I. We can observe the following:

past tense of *be*: the invariant form is *was*, as in *They was*, *I was*, and *The mighty Jets was* (3.5.1)

present tense of *be*: contracted *am* is preserved in *I'm* (3.4.2) *'s* deleted in *your mother stinky* (3.4)

third-singular *s*: absent in *she wash* (3.3.5)

past tense: simple preterit used for past (not historical present); past perfect in *had just begun* (3.5.2)

negative concord: regular in *can't smoke my pot no more* (3.6.3)

t, *d* deletion: present before vowel in *dressed in white* (3.2.3) deleted finally: *broke* rhymes with *choked* (3.23) deleted automatically in -*sts*,: *vests* rhymes with *Ness* (3.2.4.)

r-vocalization: *choker* rhymes with *Coca*

In addition to these obvious correlations with NNE phonology and grammar, we can note that *boat* is allowed to rhyme with *choke*, indicating the weak status of these final single consonants. Furthermore, *more* rhymes with *old* and *bold*: this happens when final *d* is deleted, *l* and *r* are vocalized, and post-vocalic schwa is deleted, yielding *o'*, *bo'*, and *mo'*.

One might say that these phonological NNE features are not actually in the Jets song itself, but are provided by singers who impose their grammar on the song as they go. Rhymes are of course the best evidence of the general phonological properties embodied in the song. But we can also note that the West Side Story song is sung by the same Jets, and it reflects standard grammar with remarkable regularity. The West Side Story song is marked by the word *you're* repeated over and over-- sixteen times, and each time in the standard form; NNE deletes *'re* and *are*, so that the typical NNE form is *When you a Jet*...(3.4.8). The possessive *your* occurs four times, each time in standard form (3.3.6) Similarly, we see *'s* preserved after a noun phrase in *company's expected*--which is of course possible but not characteristic of the vernacular (3.4.5). Third singular *-s* appears twice, in *Here comes the Jets* and *someone gets*. The first of these is a hypercorrect form which shows that the singer hears the language of the West Side Story song as that of schoolroom English where *s*'s are inserted freely. The only non-standard form is *you got* which is of course characteristic of white speakers. In a word, the grammar, lexicon and phonology of the West Side Story song fits in with its content: it is the view of the Jets from on top, looking down, the Jets seen through middle class eyes and heard through middle class ears.

As a part of urban folklore, the Jets' own song preserves or fossilizes other elements of the culture. But it is also somewhat out-of-date as a whole; the club which we view through this song is not the Jets of 1965, but rather an idealized model following an older normative pattern which is also found in the explicit ideology and mythology of the members. The Jets is a fighting organization: but the period of gang rumbles is essentially over, and the amount of group fighting which takes place today is much less than the song suggests. The song also preserves a negative attitude towards blackness which is rapidly being modified. However, the general attitude towards women and towards sex in general is current and shows no tendency to change.

4.2.2. Toasts. One of the most elaborate and highly developed features of the NNE sub-culture is the body of oral epic poetry known as toasts or sometimes as jokes. The lack of communication between NNE and other sub-cultures is most vividly illustrated by the fact that this body of poetry is almost completely unknown to white society, but every Negro man or woman who has contact with the vernacular culture is aware of some of these toasts and is familiar with the tradition. Until recently, white collectors of folklore knew nothing of this material, which must be ranked at the very highest level of achievement in terms of poetic and narrative values. The recent volume of Roger D. Abrahams, Deep Down in the Jungle, (1964), has done a great deal to repair this lack of knowledge. Abrahams collected a number of toasts from adult Philadelphia informants, including many that we also encountered. He gives several versions of each, with some valuable background and general analysis. Abrahams justly describes his materials as "the greatest flowering of Negro verbal talent". The toasts collected by John Lewis from some of his adult informants seem in some ways to be of even higher quality: we will quote some below to exemplify toasts at their highest level. We will also be concerned with toasts as they are known to adolescent members of the NNE peer groups we have studied, to show the level of verbal skills achieved by some members of the Jets and Cobras.

In the following account, we will draw upon the toasts given by "Saladin", a Negro leader prominent in the nationalist movement in Harlem, to John Lewis. A number of these toasts were not known before, and among them are such highly developed works as "The Fall".

Toasts are long oral epic poems. Most often there are many complex metrical arrangements, and even within most toasts the meter varies much more freely than in other oral literature. "The Fall", for example, has a quatrain of the form AA B CC B where the first and third are four-foot lines with internal rhyme, and the second and fourth lines have three feet apiece. Toasts are compositions of some size, both in conception and length. "The Fall", for example, has 249 lines. The opening lines show the complexity of the form, the wealth of rhetorical devices used, and the wide scope of the unknown author's view. Toasts are recited in a rhythmic, slightly musical "rifting" style.

"Who's the lame who says he knows the game
And where did he learn to play?
For I'd like to tell of how I fell
And the tricks fate played on me.
Now if you gather roun' I'll run it down
And unravel my history.

It was a Saturday night, the jungle was bright
As the game stalked their prey;
And the cold was crime on the neon line,
And the weak was doomed to pay,
Where crime begun, where daughter fought son,
And your father stayed in jail,
As your mom lied awoke with her heart almost broke
As they loaded that train to hell;
Where blood was shed for the sake of bread
And winos were rolled for their port,
By the right of a hand of some murphy man
Of the words some conman spoke,
Where the addicts prowl where the tiger growl
And search for that lethal blow,
Where the winos crump for that can heat rump
You'll find their graves in the snow;
Where girls of vice sell love for a price
And even the law's corrupt,
But you keep on tryin' as you go down cryin',
"Say man, it's a bitters cup."

"The Fall" is about a man of the street who gets a very able whore to work for him. As in many toasts, there are lines where the man reciting the poem inserts his own name as if he had indeed composed it:

She was a brownskin moll like a Chinese doll
Walkin' in the ways of sin
Up and down she trod with a wink 'n a nod
To the nearest whorehouse den.
But it wasn't by chance that I caught her glance
For I intended to steal this dame.
And I smiled with glee as I thought "Oh golly, gee,
It's time for old Saladin to game.". . . .
I said "Bitch, dry your tears,
The old kind lover's here.
And I'm stakin' my claim at a piece of this game
And vowin' to have no peers."
Now, Jack, the whore looked at me like a slave set free
Said "Daddy, I'll be your girl."
And her man didn't stir as I split with her.
We made it all over the world."

There follow many observations on the professional problems of the pimp's trade, and the kind of trouble that most whores give. But this particular girl was exceptional:

But a whore got to go to be a real class whore
To beat this triple bitch of mine,
Like a sex machine she stood between
Raindrops, snow, and hail.
She stood on hot bricks to have her tricks
Come cyclone, blizzard or gale.
She tricked with the Frenchmen torpedo 'n the henchmen

To her they were all the same.
She tricked with the Greeks, Arabs and freaks
And breeds I cannot name.
She tricked with the Jews, Apaches and Siouxs
She even tricked in the house of God.
For there wasn't a son of a gun who this whore couldn't
shun,
That played to claim a rod.

The hero confesses without shame that he spent all of the money coming in on dope. But as his "habit got taller", his "money got smaller". When finally his whore takes sick, the narrator decides to get him another woman. He is roundly denounced by her for this idea; she warns him, "May the black coats of sorrow pick your ass up tomorrow If you walk beyond that door". The protagonist then explains the ethics of the trade to her in the following language:

"Whore, you ain't no lame, you know the game,
Then call it cop and blow.
You had your run, now you done,
I'm goin' to get me another whore.
I can't make no swag off no swayback nag
Whose thoroughbred days are past,
Why I'd look damn silly puttin' a cripple' filly
On a track that's way too fast.
I might have put you in charge of a whore house lodge,
Or give you some girls of your own to rule,
But you spoke of hell and sending me to jail,
Bitch, you must be a goddam fool.
Cause a whore ain't shit without a good man's wit,
And one monkey don't stop no show.
In a hour or two I'll have me a goddam slew
Of bitches out there to whore.
So step aside cause I'm fixin' to slide,
I mean, get the fuck up off my back
Cause my poke is low and I need me a whore
To run me a steady track."

The complex rhetoric of this statement is worth noting. The race-track metaphor is extended over the whole second quatrain, and then re-introduced in the final line. The author shows great skill in incorporating apothegms--short, proverbial sentences--which make his general point with force. First he observes, "a whore ain't shit without a good man's wit", and then adds "One monkey don't stop no show": a rhetoric is used to express the basic values of the sub-culture which the hero represents.

The whore's claim to special consideration in the light of her past achievement is here abruptly denied. Gratitude or pity are not terms which appear in the rules of the game being played here. In the speaker's eyes, the world is abruptly divided into those who know the game and play according to the rules, and those who are ignorant of the rules--the lames. There is no claim that the game pays off--in fact it is played without profit. The underlying attitude is one of despair--since there is no hope of any good outcome, the only satisfaction is from playing with dignity, and according to the rules. The end result in this case is "the fall"; The whore denounces the hero to the police: "You should have seen the shit that bitch had writ All over the police report", and he winds up in prison. Adhering to the code which he endorsed in rebuking her, the hero concludes with the following statement:

> Now as I sit in my six by six cell in the county jail
> Watchin' the sun rise in the east,
> The morning chills give slumber to the slumbering beast,
> Farewell to the nights, and the neon lights,
> Farewell to one and all;
> Farewell to the game, may it still be the same
> When I finish doin' this fall.

There is a more explicit statement of this fundamental attitude in another toast called "Honky-Tonk Bud". Bud is "a hipcat stud" who is arrested by a federal agent provocateur on a narcotics charge. The judge gives Bud the conventional opportunity to speak: "Before I pass sentence on you, have you anything to say?" The hero confronts the judge in the following passage:

> Now Bud looked down with a halfway frown,
> In his hand was a brown felt hat.
> He looked at Judge Stern. He said "you'll never learn,"
> Then he told him where it was at.
> He said "I'm not cryin' cause the agent was lyin'
> And left you all with a notion,
> That I was a big wheel in the narcotics field
> I hope the fag cops a promotion.
> It's all the same, it's all in the game
> I dug when I sat down to play.
> That you take all odds, deal all low cards,
> It the dues the dope fiend must pay."

It is important to observe that in both "The Fall" and "Honkey-Tonk Bud", the most important events are speech events. Though the actual course of events goes against the hero, he triumphs over his opponents by his words. Bud goes to jail, but it is clear that his moral statement has shaken the forces of the law. The fact that he foresaw the outcome, and did not avoid it by refusing to play the game, gives him a moral superiority within this value system. The implication is that others would not have the courage to face such penalties:

> Now the judge looked at Bud cause he was a down stud,
> He had done this with many men.
> He said, "It would shock the nation if I gave you
>   probation

So I must give you from five to ten."
Now here's a note I want the repo'ter to repo't,
Bud lost with a grin,
But those who know will tell you for sho'
That that same grin went out with him.

Two recurrent themes of the toasts are found in these extracts--the moral despair of the hero, and the use of scorn and overpowering verbal force to win an encounter. These themes are also found in one of the most widely known toasts, "The Sinking of the Titanic". The commercial ballad of this name contains some blunt references to the fact that most of the poor people drowned because they were down below, while the rich survived. In the toast, the spokesman of the oppressed is Shine, a Negro stoker. He comes to the captain of the ship with repeated reports that the ship is leaking:

Shine ran on deck and said "Cap'n, cap'n, I was downstairs beatin' my meat
And the water rose above my feet."

The captain sends Shine back down again with the false assurance that all is well:

The captain said, "Shine, Shine, have no doubt
I told you we got ninety-nine pumps to pump the water out."

Finally, Shine sees that the ship is going to sink, and he jumps overboard and begins to swim to shore. The captain, a beautiful woman, and other representatives of society appeal to Shine for help. They offer all they have, but Shine rebukes them sharply by reminding them how unimportant their values are compared to life itself. [Note that in this toast the regular lines are intersperesed with prose transitions.]

After a bit the captain saw the boat was gon' sink.

He said, "Shine, Shine, save poor me,
I'll make you the Captain of the seven long seas."
Shine said, "Captain on land, captain on sea
If you wanna live, motherfucker, you better swim like me!"

A pregnant woman asks Shine for help, but she receives no more special consideration than the whore in "The Fall":

She said, "Shine, Shine, save poor me,
My little baby has a papa to see!"
Shine said, "You round here lookin' like a pregnant pup.
Go find that motherfucker that knocked your ass up."

The last appeal to Shine is from a baby:

After a bit, Shine met up with a baby. The baby was cryin'.

Shine said, "Baby, baby, please don't cry,
All y'all little motherfuckers got a time to die."
He said "You got eight little fingers and two little thumbs,
And your black ass goes when the wagon comes."

Shine's rebuke to the baby is cast in the same despairing terms that are used by other tragic heroes. When Achilles is asked for mercy, he too argues that we all must die, and that no one can get special consideration.

> Ay, friend, thou too must die: why thus lamentest thou?
> Patroklos too is dead, who was better far than thou.
> Seest thou not also what manner of man am I for might and goodliness?.....
> Yet over me too hang death and forceful fate. Iliad XXI

Shine is unique among the heroes of toasts in that he survives and triumphs over his enemies in actual deeds. In later stanzas, we find him strolling through Central Park while two lovers pass him:

Shine was strollin' through the park one day,
Met two lovebirds comin' his way.
One lovebird said to the other,
"Under your dress your heart lies,
That's what makes my love rise:
Shakespeare, Shakespeare, Shakespeare."

He ridicules the sentimentality of the lovers, and rejects at the same time the most revered literary figure of the dominant society:

Shine kept on walkin'.
On Shine's way back Shine met these two lovebirds again.

Shine tried to remember what they said.
Shine said "Under your dress your pussy lies,
That's what makes my dick rise:
Bullshit, bullshit, bullshit."

Shine gives us the most explicit statement of the point of view which underlies all of the toasts: total rejection of the values of white middle-class society. The heroes are all "bad": they claim the virtues of courage, physical strength, clarity and coolness of mind, and knowledge of the rules of the game and ways of the world. They explicitly reject respect for the law; romantic love; pity and gratitude; chivalry or special consideration for women. Note that these are the virtues which characterize a "gentleman": Shine, Honkey-Tonk Bud and the narrator of "The Fall" are heroes, but they are not gentlemen. Furthermore, the heroes of the toasts defy the values of middle-class society in respect to language: in their use of taboo words, and their scorn for sentimental and abstract verbiage. They do not, however, reject the esthetic values of poetry: the intricate system of rhyme, meter and metaphor shows a great emphasis on the poetic aspect of verbal skill. Shakespeare is not rejected as a poet, but as a symbol of hypocritical romantic poetry. Shine's rejection of Shakespeare is roughly equivalent to Romeo's rejection of the empty romantic style which he used before he fell in love with Juliet. Note that when Elizabethan heroes are desperate, they also fail to behave as gentlemen: witness Hamlet with his mother, the violence of Romeo, or Hamlet wrestling with Laertes in Opehilia's grave.

The heroes of the toasts are bad by virtue of the same series of "delinquent" or "bad" actions which were noted above in connection with delinquent sub-culture. They violate the norms of white society in fighting, stealing, cursing, fornication, the illegal use of drugs and the excessive use of alcohol. Furthermore, their attitude towards women is the reverse of that endorsed by middle-class society: they reject chivalry, exploit women and show even more violence towards them than towards men. Some of the violence towards women seems unmotivated. For example, in the toast based on the history of Stagolee, there are several occasions on which the hero shoots a woman dead on the slightest provocation:

Now some dirty bitch turned out the light,
But I had Billy Lyon in my god-damned sight.
One little bitch hollered, "Stackolee, please!"
I shot that bitch clean to her knees.
The other one hollered, "Call the law!"
I shot that bitch in the god-damned jaw.

But there are toasts which express the hero's anger towards women as a justifiable reaction to bad treatment. The toast called "The Letter" is about a pimp who goes to jail and is deserted by his whore. He begins with the general statement:

I played the game an' I'm here to say
There's some no good bitches and crime don't pay.
They'll get you into trouble and that ain't no doubt,
Know motherfuckin' well they can't get your black ass
   out.

He gets a "penny post-card from the no-good whore" which is quite blunt:

I went to see your lawyer, but he wasn't in,
Be up to see you soon, but god knows when.
But don't worry while they got your ass up there

Breakin' up rocks like a grizzly bear
I'm a try my damnedest to keep you black ass there.
Love, Rose."

When the hero gets out of jail, he meets his whore standing on the corner, "Bare-headed, damn near blind", and she asks him for a dime. He uses a familiar routine to put her down--one used by Shine and others, but developed with an especially vindictive force here:

I said, "Bitch before you get the price of nothin'
A grape got to grow as large as a pumpkin.
Rockefeller can't have a motherfuckin' cent,
You got to wash and wring you drawers for the police precinct
Grab the United States and throw it over in Rome
Take a baseball bat and run your mammy away from home,
Do like the Hebrew children and walk through fire,
Bring me the rock that killed Goliath,
Dig up Moses an' kiss him in the crack of his ass,
Look up a camel's back and blow the hump out his ass
And if you do all this in record-breaking time
I might give you a nickel but not a whole motherfuckin' dime."

This rhetoric of contraries shows the familiar juxtaposition of styles and cultures characteristic of the NNE: Biblical references side by side with the language of the street, geography alongside physiology. But the antagonism towards women is the predominant message. It is not merely a question of lack of respect for women, but rather a serious hostility deeply embedded in the street culture. In considering various educational tactics, one must bear in mind that this hostility makes it particularly difficult for women teachers to deal successfully with the male members of the NNE culture.

The rhymes of the toasts. The quotations given above show that the rhymes used in the toasts are based on the sound patterns of the NNE vernacular. We can immediately see the rules of consonant cluster simplification in such end rhymes as *corrupt* and *cup*; *girl* and *world*; *toll* and *cold*; *cross* and *lost*. Final voiceless stops are often merged in glottal stop, as shown by such rhymes as *port* and *spoke*; *sleet* and *deep*. The half-line, *and winos are rolled for their port* was originally heard by us as ...*rolled for their poke*. Phonetically the form was simply [poʔ]. But John Lewis pointed out that winos do not have *pokes* (wallets); what they do have is *port*. Obviously the line makes more sense with *port*, after one takes into account the operation of several linguistic rules: (1) final -*t* going to glottal stop; (2) vocalization of pre-consonantal *r*; and (3) deletion of post-vocalic schwa. The regular operation of these rules is shown in numerous rhymes such as *note* and *report* in Honkey-Tonk Bud: Now here's a note I want the repo'ter to repo't. Similarly, we find blow rhyming with floor: A crack an' a blow sent me to the flo'.

There are other rhymes in the toasts which reflect various Southern vowel systems. There is a merger of short and long /e/ before -l, so that jail rhymes with hell; male with Jezebel; fell with tale; and tail with hell. The word get is of course [gɪt], so that it rhymes with hit (or even with quits) The merger of i and e before nasals is of course quite regular. When this is combined with the deletion of final -t,d, we have such rhymes as in and friend, sin and end. Finally, it is worth noting that the monopthongization of the diphthongs /ay/ and /aw/ before -l is complete enough to allow the rhyme of piles and bowels.

Archaic language in the toasts. We have noted above that the Jet song preserves some outdated elements of commercial culture, just as children's rhymes do. The toasts preserve mythical figures of folklore such as Stagolee, the Titanic, and John Henry, and along with them archaic or literary expressions which were known to the original composers. In "The Fall", we hear of "the bitter cup" and "the slumbering beast". In "The Night before X's" as delivered by Larry, (see below) we hear "Stranger, stranger, who may thou be?" Mixed with this and other formal language, there is a great deal of slang--some old, and some current. In general, there is some separation of style by quatrain; the beginning and the ending of "The Fall" are more formal than the middle. But even in the beginning, we find such a mixed quatrain as:

> Where the addicts prowl, where the tiger growl
> And search for that lethal blow;
> Where the winos crump for that can heat rump
> You'll find their graves in the snow.

Here we find two fairly obscure slang terms--crump and rump--following prowl and lethal. Not only are older slang terms embedded (and eventually transformed) in the toasts, but there are also preserved beliefs and past history of the culture which may be obscure to outsiders. For example, at one point the narrator complains about whores who are drug addicts:

> Turnin' dollar tricks to make up a fix
> And the Chinaman is doin' all the pimpin'.

One cannot understand the last line without knowing that drugs were originally introduced into Harlem by the Chinese, and that the Chinaman is still the abstract symbol for the drug supplier. Since the money is going to the Chinaman, he is metaphorically doing the pimping. There is another Chinaman mentioned when the whore falls sick:

> But the deadliest blow came when this whore
> Took sick and could not sin.
> The Chinaman spoke, no motherfuckin' joke,
> I knew this was the end.

We have not been able to identify the Chinaman who appears here as a symbol of death and fate. He is mentioned again a few lines later:

> But when lockjaw set in, believe me, friend,
> The Chinaman took his toll;
> For her ass was dead, the lips was red,
> The lips on her cunt was cold.

To many readers, the toasts may appear altogether obscure. Certainly an extended gloss could be given on almost every line. The process of creative oral transmission insures that the style of the toasts will be mixed, and that many contributions from many generations will co-exist.

The rhythm of the toasts. It was noted above that "The Fall" is written in a complex quatrain form with internal rhyme; the first and third lines are iambic tetrameter with internal rhyme, the second and fourth are trimeter. "The Sinking of the Titanic" makes skillful use of prose transitions, such as:

> Shine start strokin' on.
> After a bit Shine met up with a shark. The shark said:

The line *Shine start strokin' on* occurs between each episode and seems to arouse special enthusiasm among listeners. The prose transitions set off the regular meter of following verses by contrast:

> "Shine, Shine, you swim so fine
> You miss one stroke and your black ass is mine."

Note that the epithets which are inserted in such passages are often additions to the meter that break up the regular feet, avoiding an over-regular pattern such as You miss one stroke and your ass is mine.

The word motherfucker is used over and over again in just this way; by itself it would occupy a full half line A mótherfúcker, but it is never used this way. Instead we have such intricate rhythms as:

> Shine said, "You round here lookin' like a pregnant pup,
> Go find that motherfucker that knocked your ass up."

The rapid alternation of a polysyllabic half-line with a slow regular line is characteristic:

> Baby, baby, please don't cry
> All y'all little motherfuckers got a time to die.

The well known "Signifying Monkey" shows even more complex rhythms though the rhyme scheme is simply AA BB CC, etc. The version given by Saladin uses a rapid, pattering meter which requires considerable practice and skill in delivery:

> Lean your ear over here for a minute
> I'm a tell you 'bout the jungles and a certain monkey in it.
> Now this monkey, he ain't had no name
> But his signifyin' shit was a motherfuckin' shame.

Signifying here means the use of verbal deceit to get others into trouble. The monkey starts a fight between the lion and the elephant:

> Everything was going good in the jungle for a spell
> Till this monkey decided he would raise him some hell...
>
> He said, "Mr. Lion, Mr. Lion, there's a big burly motherfucker comin' your way
> Talks shit about you from day to day.."

Again, motherfucker is a decoration on the basic rhythm which prevents any reversion to a doggerel meter. For example, when the monkey decides to get the zebra involved, he uses these lines:

> The zebra said, "Yeah! yeah! Describe 'im!"
> He said, "He's a big burly motherfucker, weigh about ten thousand pounds,
> When he walk, he shake the motherfuckin' grounds."
> Say, "He a big peanut-eatin' motherfucker, big long flappy ears,
> Been turnin' out these parts for the last ten years."

Note that the toasts use the basic grammatical pattern of the

NNE vernacular, but they are not confined to the simple syntax of typical personal narrative (see 4.). Instead, we have such complex nominalizations as a big peanut-eatin' motherfucker, which show the elaboration of experienced adult story tellers (see 4.8.4 for NNE use of such noun phrases).

The best way to illustrate the complexity of the meter of the toasts is to compare them with an example of another type of folk poetry from the white community. "The Story of Adam and Eve" is a poem circulated in writing, which describes sexual intercourse in close detail. The meter is the over-regular anapestic tetrameter pattern, which is usually referred to as "doggerel", and most familiar to us in "The Night Before Christmas".

> Adam and Eve, as everyone knows,
> Lived in the garden without any clothes.
> In this garden there were two little leaves,
> One covered Adam and the other Eve.
> As the story goes, needless to say
> Along came the wind, and blew them away.
> The wonderful sight that caused Adam to stare
> Was Eve's brown little body all covered with hair.
> And the wonderful thing that smarted Eve's eyes
> Was Adam's big thing that started to rise...

This poem is circulated in the Negro community, but it is very distant from the toasts in vocabulary, meter and rhyme. Doggerel inserts meaningless words to preserve the dactylic line, usually conventional "poetic" elements such as all in all covered with hair. The toasts insert meaningful though optional epithets to add variety to the meter.

"Adam and Eve" shows an SE grammar in the very first line: as everyone knows. We find such lines as "And ás nature hád them in éach other's chárms". Not only is the possessive 's foreign to the vernacular, but the 18th-century rhetoric of abstract nature is foreign to the street rhetoric and Biblical rhetoric used by the toasts.

"Adam and Eve" also forms a striking contrast to the toasts in its attitude towards women. It is a woman's poem (Mr. Lewis obtained this version from a woman) in which men and women play an equal part on the surface. But the sexual details show a concentration on the woman's point of view:

> She clung to Adam as if in a bad dream,
> Her pussy was throbbing and spilling with cream.

The toasts do not share this personal, subjective attitude towards sex, and of course do not take the woman's view at all. Woman is seen as an object, in a much more mechanical light:

> Like a sex machine she stood between
> Raindrops, snow and hail
> She stood on hot bricks to lure her tricks
> Come cyclone, blizzard or gale.

Here again, we note the metrical style of the toast uses the attributive hot to form a halfline with double primary stress, avoiding the doggerel effect of something like She stayed on the bricks to lure her tricks. In both style and content, the toasts depart sharply from the doggerel of the "Adam and Eve" type, plainly derived from a literary tradition.

Telling and transmission of the toasts. The toasts show the combined effects of conservatism and flux that are typical of oral literature. Each teller is entitled to make his own modifications or additions. Sometimes a whole section of another toast is incorporated into the basic framework: that is the case with our version of "The Sinking of the Titanic", which adds to Shine's other exploits a familiar account of how Shine outwitted the Devil. Some toasts, like "The Fall", bear the mark of a single originator of genius from one end to the other; others show no such internal consistency, and are plainly the result of many re-combinations.

A great many toasts are told in jail, and some of the most expert tellers of toasts have spent a good deal of time in jail. It may seem that one reason is the time required to commit several hundred lines to memory. But we find that many adolescent boys know long toasts, and that the structure of the toasts, combined with their great intrinsic interest, makes it possible for one to memorize them with surprising ease. John Lewis played tape recordings of Saladin's toasts a number of times to friends; one day, the tape recorder was out of commission, and he found to his own surprise that he had learned without realizing it the greater part of many toasts.

The toasts are delivered in a rhetorical style which is quite different from ordinary speech. The meter is emphasized, and the whole style is far from casual. Some speeches are recited in a special voice qualifier. In "The Fall", for example, Saladin uses an excited falsetto in quoting the whore at the moment the police break in:

> "That's he! That's he!" she shouted with glee
> "That's the son of a bitch with the con man's pitch
> That made a whore out of me!"

It is important to note that the toasts are heard as very funny. They get belly-laughs from tellers and listeners alike, especially where somebody is shown as beat-up and down-and-out. At such points, the middle-class listener is apt to feel a certain sympathy for the victim which keeps him from laughing. Everybody laughs when they hear (in "The Fall"):

> She tricked with the Greeks, Arabs and freaks
> And breeds I cannot name;
> She tricked with the Jews, Apaches and Siouxs...

But it is members of the NNE culture who laugh aloud at passages such as these:

> The bitch had the piles, the inflamed bowels,
> For a month she could not pee;
> I was shot to hell when her arches fell
> Things really looked bad for me.
>
> My woman cried, she damn near died
> When I made off with her mink,
> But I stayed in my role and I stole an' I stole
> Everything but the kitchen sink.

It is clear that the toasts, and the audience who respond to toasts, are not sentimental. There is no immediate rush of sympathy for the unfortunate and the down-trodden. Though individuals may feel a great deal of sympathy and act accordingly, it is not a part of the social ethic and it is not expressed by the group. Since it is this audience itself which is the receiver in real life of the same hard luck, it might be simpler to say that the members of the street culture do not show self-pity.

Adolescent versions of the toasts. The toasts which we have been quoting so far are the adult versions, representing the fully developed form. This rich body of poetry is well known to the Jets and Cobras. Everyone is familiar with the toasts, though not everyone is able to recite them. It is a matter of common knowledge among the peer groups that some members "know a lot of jokes". The toasts are included with ordinary anec~~t~~dotes; the same term--"jokes"-is used for both.

The verbal leaders of the Jets and Cobras often excel at a wide variety of verbal skills. Little Stevie W. is one: he is small, only thirteen years old at the time of the study, and from the lower status 200's block. But he was the best singer of the Jets; in the video-taped group sessions, Stevie gives solo performances. He is given a personal handshake from Stanley, President: "Very good, my man, very good!" Stevie is the only member of the 200's block to achieve recognition from the central core of the Jets, but as we will see, he finds it very difficult at other times to break into the closed circle of the core members. Stevie leads the Jets in their performance of the Jets' song as presented above. We will note other special verbal skills of Stevie in other sections (3.9, 4.3, 4.5). In a word, Stevie is adept at almost every form of verbal skill in the vernacular culture--though not in the classroom situation, as we will see in 4.3. He speaks very fast, with very precise articulation, in a high-pitched voice.

Stevie gave us the following version of "The Night Before Xmas," in a level, high-pitched chant, using roughly the same rhythm as in his version of the Jets' own song. It begins with a parody of "The Night Before Christmas". It is worthy noting that this is in the same anapestic rhythm as "Adam and Eve" cited above, but it quickly departs from that meter except in the few lines that are direct imitations:

It was the night before Xmas and all through the pad
Reefers and cocaine was all we had.
The [nod] in the corner, coppin' a nod,
One more scratch he swore he was God.
As I went to the phone to dial with care
Wishing the reefer man would soon be there.
All of a something I heard the clatter
I ran to the door to see what was the matter.
As I opened the door, in my surprise
Five shiny badges was shinin' in my eyes.

This far, the poem follows the same line as parodies of traditional children's rhymes. The "good" activities of Christmas are replaced with the "bad" activities of the drug addicts. However, the narrative then takes a different line, following the melodramatic implications of the situation, and showing full familiarity with the details of the real-life confrontation:

Before the cops began to get rough
I ran to the bathroom, get rid of the stuff.
As they bang, I stuffed into my vein,
All I couldn't stuff I flushed down the drain.
They caught me. But I didn't give a damn.
They put me in that dark dingy cell
While I was in there, I met my friend named Snake.
Me and Snake planned a prison break.
Over the wall through the muddy grass,
Snake got caught but I was too fuckin' fast.

This hardly measures up to the standard of "The Fall". Snake does not re-appear; he is inserted simply for the sake of the rhyme. The next two lines are an isolated incident following a traditional rhyme (coal with old after the final consonant is deleted parallel to grass and fast in the last two lines above):

> I went to my girl's house, she threw on the coal,
> I say "What's wrong, baby, my love gettin' old?"

At this point, the toast merges with "Stagolee", a well-known epic about a bad man who kills quite a few bystanders in the bar called "The Bucket of Blood" in the course of his feud with Billy Lyons. Here only the most famous lines are excerpted from Stagolee, and the toast ends abruptly without arrest or trial.

> As I slipped and slide through the mud,
> I came to this place called "The Bucket of Blood".
> I asked this man for a bite to eat,
> He gave me some dirty water and a fucked-up piece of meat.

The toast now takes on the character of an ideological confrontation. The hero has sufficient justification for any anti-social action: he has been arrested and imprisoned for the use of drugs, betrayed by his girl, and treated as if he did not exist in a public bar. He asserts his identity in the following lines:

> I say. . . "_Man_, do you realize who I am?"
> He say, "I don't give a damn."
> I pulled out my forty-four,
> I shot him _all_ in his head."
> This bitch ran out there, said, "Is he dead? Is he dead?"
> I say, "If you don't think he's dead count the bullets
> in his head."

Defiance of authority here includes the rejection of the whole range of middle-class values as noted in our earlier discussion. The same toast was given us by Larry of the Jets, a member of the core hang-out group of the "six best fighters" (4.1). Larry does not take the same prominent stance as a verbal leader, since he has other claims to status. In fact he is reluctant to take a central role in the group, but his verbal skill is a matter of social knowledge. We have cited one of Larry's narratives in 4.1 above, which should serve as sufficient illustration of his skill with words, and we will cite him on a number of occasions in connection with sounding and narrative. In a single interview with Larry, fairly early in the history of his contacts with the Jets, John Lewis used his insider's knowledge of Larry's skill to overcome his reluctance to recite toasts before the microphone.

John L.: In the cats you hang out with, is there a cat who cracks a lot of jokes?
Larry: No.
John L.: Well.. How about you, man?.. Well, like some guys tell me you would tell some jokes. Whyntcha tell me a couple of jokes.

Larry: [laughs] I 'on' know no *jokes*... I've gotta be--I've gotta be *high* to talk *that* shit. I mean, you know...
John L.: You can tell a couple of jokes man...
Larry: I don't know nuttin' now, man.
John L.: Well, you know some jokes....Run it down, man! You gotta lotta tape there, baby!

At this point, Larry starts to weaken under the persistence of the interviewer and his inside knowledge. This exchange should make it clear that middle-class investigators will not find it easy to extract the verbal skills of peer group members in a formal situation, and only fairly sophisticated techniques and intimate knowledge will reveal the competence we are after.

Larry: Lawww . . Lemme see a joke...Who told you that I knew jokes, man?
John L.: Oh I know you know 'em.
Larry: I don' know no jokes.
John L.: You know some jokes man. C'mon.
Larry: Lemmee see...
John L.: Some of 'em real natural..
Larry: Awright, lemme tell you where I spent my X's Day--you heard that?
John L.: Uh-uh.
Larry: You lyin'! You did!
John L.: No, I didn' hear it.
Larry: Well, you see it was. . .

The toast is then delivered as if it was Larry's own personal experience--not only a poem composed by him, but an account of something that had happened to him. His version follows the same outlines as that of Stevie, but it has some details which were lost in the version cited by the thirteen-year-old. For example, the junky sitting on the bed is described as

> One nod, he knew he was hard.
> Two nods, he swore he was far.
> One more nod, he swore to hell he was God.

Stevie's "Over the wall, through the muddy grass" is here given as

> High water slippery grass,
> They caught Snake and bust his ass.

The bar becomes the "Tip Top Beat" (rhyming with "fucked-up piece of meat"). The final violent episodes preserve several phrases missing in Stevie's version which are important to the rhythm and style of the toast:

And I said, "Bartender, bartender,
Do you know who I am?"
And the bartender replied to me,
"No, and don't give a goddamn."
And that's when I took out my forty-four
And shot him dead in his head.
This old raggedy bitch come runnin' out,
"Is he dead? Is he dead?"
"Count the bullet holes in his motherfuckin' head".

"The Bucket of Blood" appeared in Larry's toasts as the site of a confrontation between two western gunmen: Bad Man Dan and Two Gun Green. This is a version of the tall-tale braggedocio , found in traditional frontier folklore--here adopted into NNE style. Though the locale is New Orleans, where many of the Negro badmen such as Stagkolee lived, the rest of the toast plainly reflects the western frontier. Larry's version of this toast is given on the next page, as far as he remembered it; some of his own stylistic interpolations are indicated in brackets--typical of his narrative style as well.

It is apparent that Larry does not have complete control of his material. Whereas Saladin's toasts are well integrated from start to finish, this version of "Bad Man Dan" has several incoherent aspects. Lines 5-7 seem to have little connection with the rest. Then the mysterious stranger appears in lines 8-12, and makes his boast in 14-23. This statement plainly overlaps Bad Man Dan's boast of 32-36--it uses the same rhymes and roughly the same images--though Dan's speech is better put together. The actual gun battle between Dan and Green is not too clear, and at this point Larry's narrative breaks off. We can see a gradual development of skill in Larry's versions, but it remains true that the only accomplished tellers of toasts we have encountered so far are adults.

We find the knowledge of toasts, and delight in the sound of them, among Negro adolescents throughout the country. As an example, we may quote from a group session recorded in the "Irish Channel" district of New Orleans with three fourteen-year-old Negro boys: Andrew, Gill and Armand.

WL: Do you know any toasts? . . . Do any fellows around here know toasts? . . .
Andrew: Who?
WL: Like. . . "The Sinking of the Titanic". . . "Shine, Shine, have no. . ."
Gill: Yeah! "Shine, Shine, save poor me,
Give you more pussy than you ever did see!"
[laugh]

The first request for "toasts" met blank stares; as noted

Larry H.'s version of "The Bucket of Blood"

It was a cold winter night down in New Or-dean,
When Bad Man Dan met Two Gun Green.
It was at the Bucket of Blood when those two met,
I was the bartender, that day I'll never forget.
Lucy Brown, the biggest money-makin' hole in town,
Had every faggot bleedin' from they ass,
Backed into a dick a little too fast.
What? Who's that stranger standin' in the light,
No wonder I can't pull no whores tonight.
Who's that stranger standin' in the dark,
No one here, no one but a fart.
"Stranger, stranger, who may thou be?"
When the stranger replied to me,
"My name is Nailhead, I come from Montana,
Where motherfuckers never go to bed.
I got a big enough chuckle-buck hair backed bone,
Fuck anything hair grows upon.
I died, --yeah, but not as a natural death,
I died because a frog climbed up my ass and tickled me to death.
I walked through the streets with war, lightning and thunder,
I walked through the graveyard and put the dirt to wonder.
[Tha's right]. I threw a baby up on the roof,
Run until he drown in a glass of water; therefore it's proof."
And that's when Bad Man Dan walked in the bar.
[Yeah--] Couldn't see too far.
Then here comes Green. So Green says,
"I make a black pencil light brown,
Snuff your mammy's ass without a frown,
I was born between two butcher knives,
Baptised in the dust of a Colt forty-five.
[Yeah!] Then Dan fired at Green. [Yeah! Um hm!]
"I walked through the graveyard with raw lightning and thunder,
I walked through your mother's heart, put that baby under to wonder.
I put a baby on to slaughter.
I run to the ocean and drown a drop of water [Y'know?]
[Y'know?] Then that's when one hell of a bet
Started makin' the set." [Y'know.]

Then Bad Man Dan took off for Green.
What'd poor Green did? Sat up there and creamed. [Y'know?]
Then Bad Man Dan shot him four in the head.
Green ran out there.
One to the slide--
One to the face--
Another one way out of reach. [Y'know.]
Then....Then... I forgot the rest, man.

above, the superordinate terms vary widely from place to place. (In New Orleans, as among the Jets, toasts are known as "jokes"). Even the title, "The Sinking of the Titanic", was of little help. But the beginning of the favorite line immediately aroused a response in Gill, the verbal leader of the group.

WL: You know any more about Shine?
Gill: Lessee. . . Lemme see. . Shine--lemme see--
You know tha's on a ship and the ship was sinkin', an' then a lady say--
Andrew: The shark say--
Gill: Yeah, a lady say,
"Shine, Shine, save poor me,
I'll give you more pussy than you ever did see."

Gill is not the only one who knows this toast; Andrew wants to start at a later episode, but Gill pushes him aside. He uses prose transitions just as in the version quoted above; but in Gill's version, Shine's first reply has been lost.

Gill: Then Shine didn' say nuthin'.
Shine kept swimmin'.

(In the version given by Abrahams, Shine has an elaborate reply: "Pussy ain't nothin' but meat on the bone / You may fuck it or suck it or leave it alone / I like cheese but I ain't no rat / I like pussy, but not like that.")

Gill: Then - uh - this man say,
"Shine, Shine, save poor me,
I'll give you more booty than you ever did see."
Then Shine say,
"Booty on land, booty on sea."

The rest of this reply is lost too. Booty is a term used by Negro children equivalent to "ass"; it has the same full range of meanings, including the homosexual one intended here.

Gill: An' den he met the shark. An' the shark say,
"I'm a eat you, Shine."
Shine say, he say - uh -
"Shark on land, shark on sea,
No black motherfucker gonna eat me."

Gill's prose transitions carry more of the narrative, and the amount of poetry retained has shrunk. Note that the epithet black (pejorative at the time that this toast originated) is transferred to the shark from other contexts. The balance of Gill's version of this toast is a "signifying" episode, where Shine plays the same role to the shark and the whale that the monkey plays to the elephant and the lion. But in this case, Shine isn't out just to "raise a little hell"; he uses his verbal skill to confuse and confound the enemy, and so come safe to shore.

Gill: Then he kep' goin'. Then he met a whale. He say, "Mr. Whale, that shark back there say he the king of the ocean, king of the sea." And then the whale say,

"I'm the king of the ocean, I'm the king of the sea,
No black motherfucker gonna mess with me."

An' then the whale met the shark and say, "What did you tell Shine, Mr. Shark, that you're the king of the ocean, the king of the sea?" An' the shark say, "No, Mr. Whale, you got it wrong."

And then Shine got asho'.

After Gill finishes, Andrew says, "They have another one that goes like this..." and then proceeds to tell one of the well-known jokes of Negro folklore. No distinction in principle is thus made between the poetic form of the epic and the prose anecdote. At the same time, the audience and the teller plainly respond to the poetic form. Prose uses a plain, conversational prose style. Poetry is delivered in a raised, "projecting" style, where the rhyme, the meter and the metaphors are all given their full weight.

In this fragment from New Orleans we can see how knowledge of the toasts is reflected among NNE adolescents. There is considerable deterioration in production; but the influence of the full form is plainly present, and the standards of verbal performance are also present to guide the further development of verbal skills. The free re-sectioning and re-combination of toasts is characteristic of an oral tradition which is very much alive.

4.2.3. Ritual insults: sounding, signifying and the dozens. One of the major speech events of the NNE sub-culture is an exchange of ritualized insults directed at an opponent's mother or other near relative. A great variety of terms describe this activity: the dozens, sounding, and signifying are three of the most common. The activity itself is remarkably similar throughout the various Negro communities, both in the form and content of the insults themselves, and in the rules of verbal interaction which operate. In this section we will refer to the institution by the most common term in Harlem--'sounding'.

Sounding, or 'playing the dozens', has been described briefly in a number of other sources, particularly Dollard (1939) and Abrahams (1962). Kochman (1968) has dealt with sounding in Chicago in his general treatment of speech events in the Negro community. In this section, we will examine sounding primarily from the point of view of the syntactic and rhetorical abilities required.

Of all speech events peculiar to the NNE peer groups, sounding is the one which occupies the most time, and on which we have the most direct evidence of the competence of members. Verbal excellence in sounding is more easily assessed than with other events, since it is essentially a competitive activity which is evaluated immediately by the audience. Since sounding is extremely frequent and is rigorously evaluated by the peer group, we have here an excellent opportunity to study the social control of language, and the emergence of standards of excellence in the vernacular.

Terms for the activity. The oldest terms for the game of exchanging ritualized insults is the dozens. Various possibilities for the origin of this term are given in Abrahams (1962: fn. 1), but none are very persuasive.

The game is known as "the dozens", "playing the dozens", or "putting someone in the dozens". The term sounding is by far the most common in New York, and is reported as the favored term in Philadelphia by Abrahams. Woofing is common in Philadelphia and elsewhere, joning in Washington, signifying in Chicago, screaming in Harrisburg (according to Kochman), and on the West Coast, such general terms as cutting or chopping. The great number of terms available suggests that there will be inevitably some specialization and shift of meaning in a particular area. Kochman suggests that "sounding" is used in Chicago for the initial exchanges, "signifying" for personal insults, and "the dozens" for insults on relatives. In New York, "the dozens" seems to be even more specialized, referring to rhymed couplets of the form

> I don't play the dozens, the dozens ain't my game
> But the way I fucked your mama is a god damn shame

But "playing the dozens" also refers to any ritualized insult directed against a relative. "Sounding" is also used to include such insults, and includes personal insults of a simpler form. Somebody can "sound on" somebody else by referring to a ritualized attribute of that person. Among the Jets, it is generally known that Johnny has the blackest skin and has a bald spot on his head. When Stevie rubs the top of his own head, and sings (to the "Batman" tune) "Di-di-di-di-di Black Ma-a-an!), he is sounding on Johnny. But when someone says something specific that is to the discredit of someone else, before an audience: "Hey, where's that five dollars you owe me!", that is not sounding but louding. As a rule, it is louding which leads to fights, rather than sounding. Among the younger boys, sounding often becomes more and more personal, until it loses its ritual character and begins to stir up a great deal of resentment. (see discussion of the Thunder-birds session below.)

It seems to be the case everywhere that the superordinate terms which describe a verbal activity are quite variable and take on a wide range of meanings, while the verbal behavior itself does not change very much from place to place. People talk much more than they talk about talk, and as a result there is more agreement in the activity than in the ways of describing it. A member of the NNE subculture may have idiosyncratic notions about the general terms for sounding and the dozens without realizing it. He can be an expert on sounds and be quite untrustworthy on "sounding".

The shape of sounds. As noted above, some of the most elaborate and traditional sounds are "dozens" in the form of rhymed couplets. A typical opening dozen is cited above. Another favorite opening is:

> I hate to talk about your mother, she's a good old soul
> She got a ten-ton pussy and a rubber asshole.

Both of these initiating dozens have "disclaiming" or retiring first lines, with second lines which contradict them. They are in this sense typical of the usage of young adults, who often back away from the dozens, saying "I don't play that game", or quoting the proverb, "I laugh, joke and smoke, but I don't play" (Abrahams 210). There is a general impression that sounding is gradually moving down in the age range--it is now primarily an adolescent and pre-adolescent activity, and not practised as much by young men twenty to thirty years old; but we have no exact information to support this notion. The rhymed dozens were used by adolescents in New York City twenty years ago. In any case, most young adolescents do not know many of the older rhymed dozens, and are very much impressed by them. To show the general style, we can cite a few others which have impressed the Jets and Cobras (and not included in the twenty examples given by Abrahams):

> I fucked your mother on top of the piano
> When she came out she was singin' the Star Spangled Banner.
>
> Fucked your mother in the ear,
> And when I came out she said, "Buy me a beer".

The couplet which had the greatest effect was probably

> Iron is iron, and steel don't rust,
> But your momma got a pussy like a Grayhound bus.

The winner in a contest of this sort is the man with the largest store of couplets on hand, the best memory, and perhaps the best delivery. But there is no question of improvisation, or creativity when playing, or judgment in fitting one sound into another. These couplets can follow each other in any succession: one is as appropriate as the other. The originators certainly show great skill, and C. Robins remembers long hours spent by his group in the 1940's trying to invent new rhymes, but no one is expected to manufacture them in the heat of the contest. It is therefore strange that adolescents of the 1960's should be so impressed with these rhymed dozens, when as a matter of fact they themselves show much greater skill in adaptation and improvisation. The Jets do know a few rhymed dozens, such as "Fucked his mother on a red-hot heater/ I missed her cunt 'n' burned my peter", but most of the traditional rhymes are no longer well known. One must be quite careful in using the rhymed dozens with younger boys: if they cannot top them, they feel beaten from the start, and the verbal flow is choked off. To initiate sounding in a single interview, or a group session, we used instead such primitive sequences as: What would you say if someone said to you, "Your momma drink pee?" The answer is well known to most peer group members: "Your father eat shit." This standard reply allows the exchange to begin along conventional lines, with room for elaboration and invention.

For our present purposes, the basic formulas can be described in terms of the types of syntactic structures, especially with an eye to the mode of sentence embedding. We will draw most of our examples from two extended sounding sessions in which sounds were used rather than simply quoted. One was on a return trip from an outing with the Jets: thirteen members were crowded on a single microbus; one hundred and eighty sounds were deciphered from the recording made in a thirty-five minute ride. The other was a group session with five Thunderbirds in which Boot, Money, David and Roger sounded against each other at great length. Sixty sounds were recorded here. In the former case, the record is incomplete, since the single microphone could not separate the overlapping voices and individual identification is difficult at best: nevertheless, it is the largest single body of sounds that has been recorded to our knowledge. In the second case, the record is complete and exact identification of every utterance is possible. It must be understood that the patterns shown here are typical of a very large number of other sessions, where sounds are cited or used.

(a) Your mother is (like)... Perhaps the simplest of all sounds is the comparison or identification of the mother with something old, ugly or bizarre: a simple equative predication. The Jets use great numbers of such simple sounds:

> Your mother look like Flipper... like Hoppity Hooper... Your mother's a Milk Dud... A Holloway Black Cow... a rubber dick... They say your mother was a Gravy Train... Your mother's a bookworm... a ass, period. ... Your mother James Bond, K.C.... Your mother Pussy Galore.

Note that the mass media and commercial culture provide a rich body of images. Such sounds were particularly appropriate on the Jet outing because every odd or old person that passed on the way would be a stimulus for another sound.

> Your mother look that taxi driver... Your mother a applejack-eater...a flea-bag... the Abominable Snowman... Your mother is Phil D. Basket [calypso accent]. .. Your mother's a diesel... a taxicab driver.

Another passer-by sets off a train of simple identifications at the very end of the Jet outing:

> --There go Willie mother right there.
> --Your mother *is* a lizard.
> --Your mother smell like a roach.
> --Your mother name is Benedict Arnold.

One passing lady is the focus of a whole series of sounds. One can sound on someone simply by saying that "There go your mother."

> --Hey-ey! [whistle] ... That's your mother over there!
> --I know that lady.
> --That's your mother.
> --Hell, look the way that lady walk.
> --...she sick in the head.
> --Walk like she got a lizard-neck.

(b) Your mother got... Of equal simplicity, from a syntactic point of view, is the series of properties attributed to someone's mother with the form Your mother got so and so. The Thunderbirds use long sequences of this type.

Boot: Your mother got a putty chest.
Boot: Your mother got hair growin' out her dunkie hole.
Roger: Your mother got a .45 in her left titty.
Money: Your mother got a 45 degree titty.
Boot: Your mother got titties behind her neck.

The Jets use simple sounds of this sort as well. In this case, the verb got was supplied accidentally in a different construction, and was used as a point of departure.

--You got the nerve to talk.
--Your mother got funky drawers.
--Your mother got braces between her legs.

Again,

--Your mother got boobies that shake...hangdown lips...
--Bell mother got a old beat-up boot...
--Her mother got a face like a rubber ass...
--Junior got a face like a clown...

Note that it it is possible for one of the Jets to appear suddenly as the subject of a sound, though the majority are directed against someone's mother.

In some ways, sounds of the X got... type are more complex when directed against a member, possibly because the comparisons are not as ritualized. Some of these are original and/or complex similes:

--He got a head like a water-hydrant, and shit...
--He got a head like a water-pump... a mailbox.
.... like the front of a bus.

The Thunderbirds say:

Boot: Money got a head like a tornado mixed with a horse.
Money: You got a head of a motor.

(c) Your mother so ______ she ______. More complex comparisons are done with a quantifier, and adjective, and an embedded sentence of the type (b) or other predication.

David: Your mother so old she got spider webs under her arms.

Boot: Your mother so old she can stretch her head and lick out her ass.

Such sounds can be made freely against a member.

Roger: Hey Davy, you so fat you could slide down the razor blade without gettin' **cut.**
... an' he so thin that he can dodge rain drops.

These are traditional "fat" and "thin" similes; they take on a particular value here because David _is_ fat, (a ritualized attribute for him). Boot continues with ritual sounds along these lines:

Boot: Eh eh, your mother's so skinny she could split through a needle's eye.

Boot: Your mother's so skinny, about that skinny, she can get in a Cheerioat and say, "Hula hoop, hula hoop!"

This last variant is one step more complex, with two clauses subordinated and two commercial products conjoined into one rhetorical figure. The same simile appears with a different breakfast cereal in a Jet sound (Stanley's):

--Your mother so skinny, she do the hula hoop in a Applejack.

Other Jet similes are somewhat more advanced than the T-Bird ones.

--Bell grandmother so-so-so- ugly, her rag is showin'.
--Bell mother was so small, she bust her lip on the curve.
--Your mother so white she hafta use Mighty White.
--Your mother so skinny, she ice-skate on a razor blade.
... so skinny she can reach under the doorknob...
... so low she c'play Chinese handball on a curve.
... so low, got to look down to look up.
... so ugly, she got stinkin' with a glass of water.
... so black, she sweat chocolate.
... so black that she hafta steal to get her clothes.
... so black that she has to suck my dick to get home.

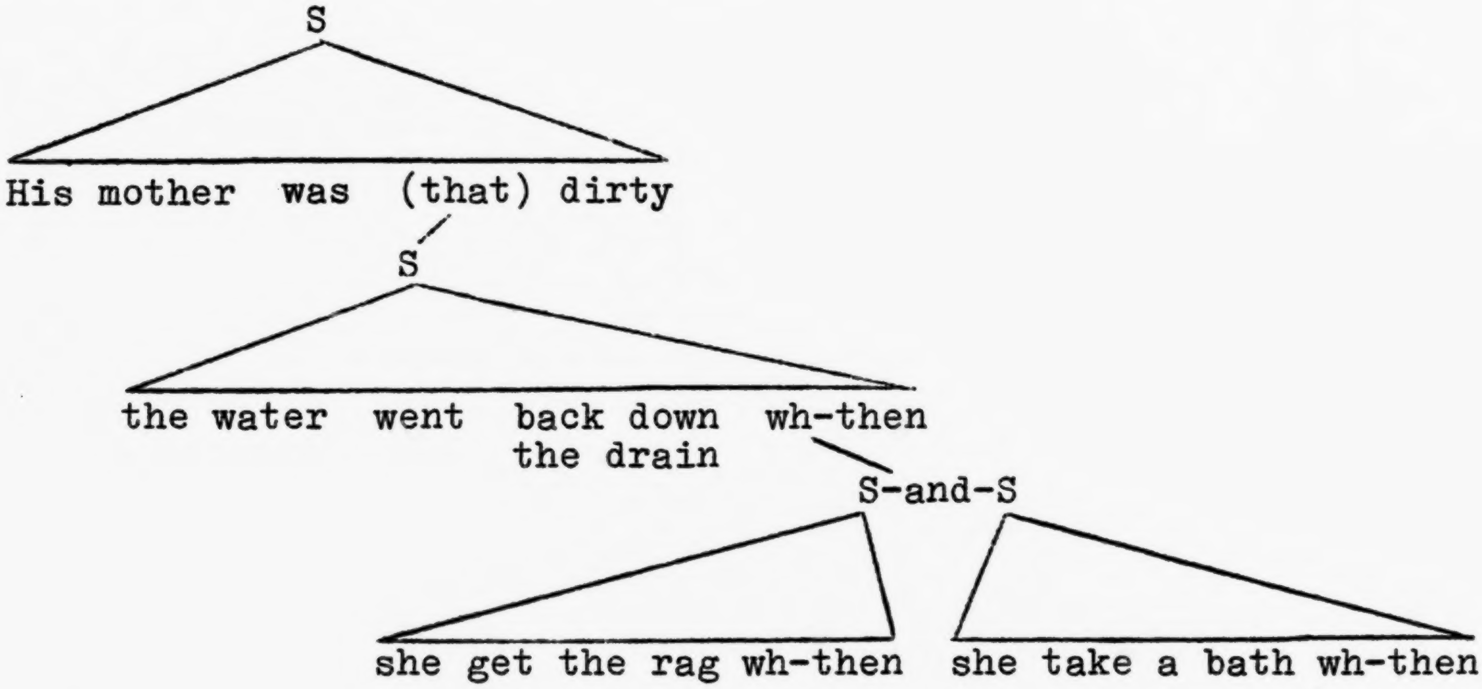
Sometimes these similes have clauses subordinated within them: "your mother is so_____ that when she______ you can ______." To get all of this into one proposition is sometimes difficult in the heat of the moment.

--Your mother's so small, you play hide-and-go-seek, y'all c'slip under a penny.

Here the conjunction _when_ is omitted (not uncommon in the speech of children), but the _y'all_ seems out of place, and it would not be too unfair to say that this syntax is just beyond the range of performance available to the speaker. Boot of the Thunderbirds can handle constructions of this complexity, but he is the only one who can: the following sound of Boot is even more complex, since the when clause conjoins two other clauses:

> Boot: His mother was so dirty, when she get the rag take a bath, the water went back down the drain.

Here the only flaw in the surface structure is perhaps the deletion of the and of and take a bath. The underlying structure of this sentence might be shown as:


S
His mother was (that) dirty
S
the water went back down the drain wh-then
S-and-S
she get the rag wh-then
she take a bath wh-then

The structure of the sound makes it necessary to foreground the when- clauses, so that the action which makes the insult be last rather than end with a condition. This means that two clauses interpose between the quantifier and the predication went down--a type of left-hand embedding in the surface which is indeed rare in colloquial speech. Boot uses a similar construction without the initial so clause in the following sound, which again is well beyond the syntactic competence of most members:

> Boot: Your mother, when she got to work and she had--those, you know--open-toe shoes, well, her stockings reach her--be sweeping the ground.

Notice that the following sound is much simpler, since the main point is made by a subordinated clause which can therefore appear in final position:

> **Boot:** His mother go to work without any drawers on, so that she could get a good breeze. [sec. 3.5.6]

(Could here is of course 'present,' equal to can). Some of the Jets can use constructions of a complexity equal to those of Boot just given. The most complex syntax occurs in sounds of the type Your X has Y with attributive quantifiers dominating several sentences.

> --Who father wear raggedy drawers?
> --Yeh, the ones with so many holes in them when-a-you walk, they whistle?

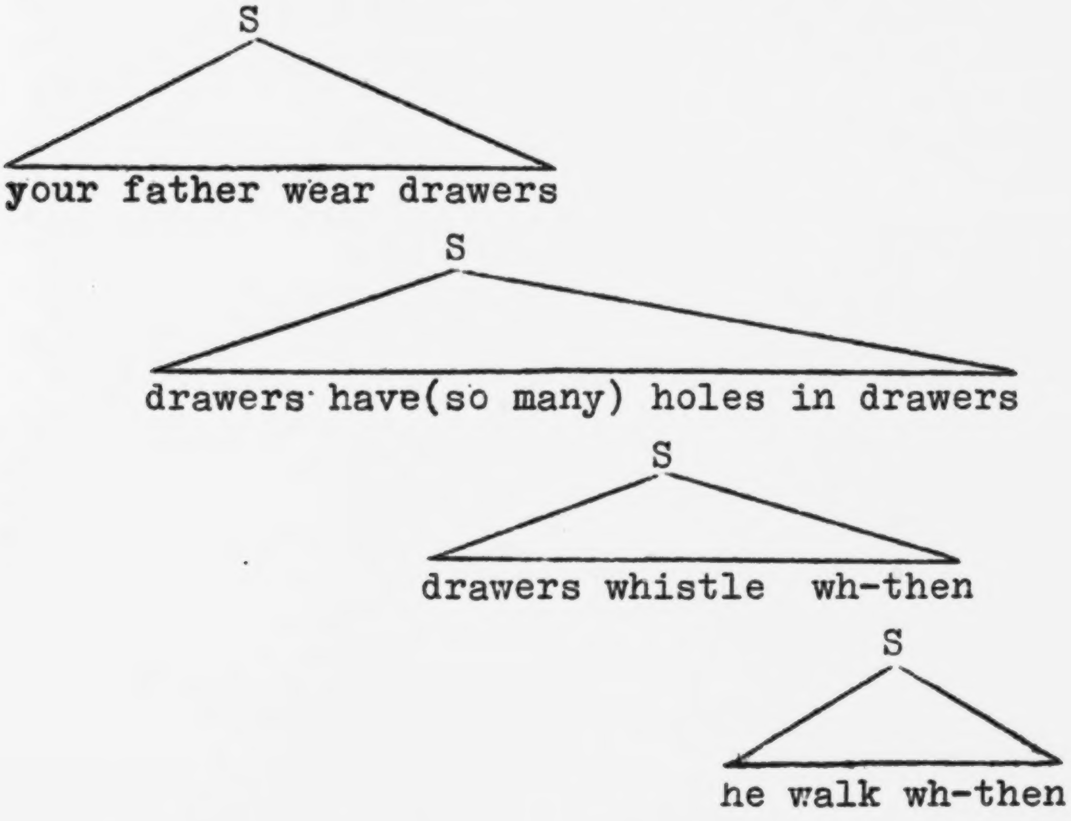
This sound is received with immediate enthusiasm.

> --Oh, shi-it! When you walk they whistle! Oh shit!
> --Tha's all he got lef'... He never buys but one pair o'drawers.

And shortly afterwards, this sound models another of the same form:

> Jr.: Ronald got so many holes in his socks, when he walks them shoes hum!
> -- Them shoes say MMMM

Again, it will he helpful to show some of the abstract structure which underlies sounds of this complexity:



The comparative node so many is contained in a relative clause, and it in turn dominates a sentence which dominates a time clause. It cannot be accidental that all of these complex structures are positively evaluated by the group: we can argue that only an idea of exceptional merit would justify for the originator the effort of using such syntax, and that the evaluation refers to the idea; or we can argue that the complexity of the structure itself is impressive for the listener. This is an extremely difficult question to resolve, but clearly an important one if we are to understand the function of complex syntax.

(d) Your mother eat______. We now return to a different type of sound which does not involve similes or metaphors, but portrays direct action with simple verbs. The power of these sounds seems to reside in the incongruity or absurdity of the elements juxtaposed--which may be only another way of saying that we do not understand them.

Boot: I heard your mother eat rice crispies without any milk.
Roger: Eat 'em raw!
Boot: Money eat shit without puttin' any cornflakes on.

The Jets use such contructions freely as well.

--His mother eat Dog Yummies.
--Somebody said your mother's breath smell funny.
--They say your mother eat Gainesburgers.

--Your mother eat fried dick heads.
--Your mother eat coke-a-roaches.
--Your mother eat rat heads.
--Your mother eat Bosco.

--Your mother a applejack-eater.

--Your mother eat scumbag.

One obvious recipe for constructing sounds of this type is to mention something disgusting to eat. Actually, most of the items mentioned here are not in that class, and as we will see in discussing sequencing in sounding, only half of the examples we have here are even obscene. How can we explain then, Your mother eat Bosco? One argument is that Bosco (a commercial chocolate milk) is brown instead of white. Dog Yummies are not disgusting (they are edible but not palatable) but it is plainly a low status thing to eat dog food. These points hit at poverty, always an apt subject for sounding. So too, it is not that cereal without milk is here sounded on as merely odd, but rather as a sign of poverty. Roger's response inserted here shows that this was indeed a successful sound. Your mother a applejack eater is interesting. Intuitively, it seems that this is a more effective sound than Your mother eat applejack. (Applejack, a new breakfast cereal at the time, may take its importance from its homonymy with applejack whiskey.) If so, it is a particularly valuable piece of evidence that syntactic complexity is a positive feature of sounds. (See the toast "Signifying Monkey" for such complex nominalizations as big peanut-eatin' motherfucker, relatively rare in colloquial speech).

(e) Your mot~~her raised~~ you on________. This is a highly specific pattern which is fairly simple syntactically, but is particularly effective in striking at both the opponent and his mother. In the Thunderbirds' session, a series of such sounds was initiated by one of the investigators.

WL: Your mother raised you on ugly milk.
Boot: Your mother raised you on raw corn.
David: Your mother raised you with big lips.
Boot: Your mother gave you milk out a cave.
Boot: Your mother gave you milk out her ass.
... When you just born, she say "Take a shot".

(f) I went to your house... A very large and important series of sounds are not directed specifically against someone's mother, but against the household and the state of poverty that exists there. Some of these are complex rhymes, quite parallel to the rhymed dozens:

Boot: I went to your house to ask for a piece of cheese
The rat jumped up and say "Heggies, please".

Heggies is the claiming word parallel to dibbs, halfsies, allies, checks, etc. which was most common in New York City some twenty years ago. Today, heggies is a minor variant, though it is still recognized, having given way to thumbs up (and thumbs down) a half generation or so ago. This rhyme thus preserves the form most natural in Harlem at the time it was composed.

Most of the sounds of this type are in prose. Many of them are directed at the strong position of rats and roaches in the household. They may have the form of anecdotes, relatively unshaped, taking on the rough coloration of true stories.

Boot: Hey! I went up Money house and I walked in Money house, I say, I wanted to sit down, and then, you know a roach jumped up and said, "Sorry, this seat is taken."

Roger: I went in David house, I saw the roaches walkin' round in combat boots.

Several from our session with the "Aces" may be quoted here; this was from a discussion about sounding in which the boys were quick to note where they had learned various sounds.

Tony: A boy named Richard learned me this one: When I came across your house, a rat gave me a jay-walkin' ticket.

Renard: When I came to your house, seven roaches jumped me and one search me.

Ted: And I made this one up: I was come in your house; I got hit on the back of my head with a Yoohoo bottle.

We would judge Ted's original sound as weak; it leans upon the humor of specifying a Yoohoo bottle but does not connect up with one of the major topics of sounding. One such topic is the bathroom, or lack of one, which can be a strong point to sound on:

Boot: I went to your house and ask your mother, could I go to the bathroom. She said, "The submarine jus' lef'."

Roger: I went to his house--I wanted to go to the bathroom, and her mother--his mother gave me a pitchfork and a flashlight.

Roger: I ringed his bell and the toilet stool flushed.

Remarks about someone's house, how poor it is, are apt to become quite personal, as we will see below. The Jets did not produce many of the "I went in X's house..." sounds, but the following occurred in quick succession:

--I went in Junior house 'n' sat in a chair that caved in.
--You's a damn liar, 'n' you was eatin' in my house, right?
--I went to Bell's house 'n' a Chinese roach said, "Come and git it."
--I brought my uncle--I brought my uncle up Junior house--I didn't trust them guys.

The tendency to take "house" sounds personally shows up in the second line of this series. As we will see below, the charge that "you was eatin' in my house" returns the accusation of hunger against the originator, and this can have a solid basis in real life.

(g) Other anecdotal forms. The anecdotes of the "I went to X's house" type are the largest body of anecdotal sounds, but there are many others which do not fall into a single mold. Many are quite long and include the kind of extra detail which can give the illusion, at the outset, that an actual story is being told. From the Jets' session we find

> --I ran over Park Avenue--you know, I was ridin' on my bike--and-uh-I seen somebody fightin'; I said lemme get on this now. I ran up there and Bell and his mother, fallin' all over: I was there first x x x gettin' it--gettin' that Welfare food x x

The incoherent sections are often filled with slurping noises which are an important part of such food sounds--indicating that those involved were so desperately hungry and so uncivilized that they behaved like animals. The theme of "Welfare" appears here only incidentally: in other groups, it is a more important part of sounding.

One can deliver an anecdote which matches in content the themes of the rhymed dozens.

> --Boah. I'm not gonna say who it was, boah. But I fucked somebody's mother on this bridge one night, Whooh! That shit was so good, she jumped overboard in the river.

There are any number of miscellaneous sounds that can be disguised as pseudo-anecdotes.

> Roger: One day, Money's mother's ass was stuck up and she called Roto-Rooter.

On the other hand, there are anecdotes which take the form of rhymes:

> Boot: I went down south to buy a piece of butter
> I saw yo' mother layin' in the gutter.
> I took a piece of glass and stuck it up her ass
> I never saw a motherfucker run so fas'.

Narrative typically presents the simplest type of syntax, with minimal subjects and preterit verb heads (see 4.8). The anecdotal type of sound appears to be most effective when it is delivered with hesitations and false starts, rather than with the smooth delivery of the other types of sounds. The technique is therefore closely associated with certain types of narrative styles in which the point is delayed to the final clause, where the Evaluation is fused with Result and Coda, as in a joke. It is generally true that all sounds must have this structure, in which the evaluative point is placed last.

(h) Portraits. Just as narrative calls for simple syntax, sounds which present elaborate portraits demand syntactic complexity. The most common are those which place someone's mother on the street as a whore.

> --Willie mother stink; she be over here on 128 St. between Seventh 'n' Eighth, waving her white handkerchief: [falsetto] "C'mon, baby, only a nickel."
>
> --Hey Willie mother be up there, standin' the corner, be pullin' up her-her dress, be runnin' her ass over 'n' see those skinny, little legs.

These sketches of habitual activity naturally call for an invariant be (3.4.11), with a number of co-ordinate participles dependent on the subject. Sometimes the parallelism cannot be achieved, and one develops an ungrammatical result as in the last clause of the last example.

(i) Absurd and bizarre forms. The formal typology of sounds presented so far actually covers the great majority of sounds used. But there are a number of striking examples which are not part of any obvious pattern, sounds which locate some profoundly absurd or memorable point by a mechanism not easy to analyze. There is the darkly poetic sound used by Eddie of the Cobras:

> --Your mother play dice with the midnight mice.

Rhyme **also plays** an essential part in this uncommon sound:

> --Ricky got shot with his own fart.

We might also cite the following exchange:

> --Your mother take a swim in the gutter.
> --Your mother live in a garbage can.
> --Least I don't live on 1122 Boogie Woogie Avenue, two garbage cans to the right.

Some elements of the commercial world can enter into odd sounds, such as "Your mother scareda Right Guard." Any kind of un-feminine or bizarre behavior on the part of one's mother can be charged:

> --Willie mother make a livin' playin' basketball.
> --I saw Tommy mother wearin' high-heel sneakers to church.

(j) Response forms: puns and metaphors. Sounds are usually answered by other sounds, and the ways in which they follow each other will be discussed below. But there is one formal feature of a sound which is essentially made for responses: "At least my mother ain't..." Although these forms cannot be used to initiate sounding, several can succeed each other, as in these sequences from the "Aces" session"

> --At least I don't wear bubblegum drawers.
> --At least his drawers ain't bubblegum, it's not sticky like yours.
>
> --At least my mother don't work in the sewer.
> --At least my mother don't live in the water-crack, like yours.

There are a series of traditional responses of this form which incorporate complex puns. Abrahams cites a dozen from South Philadelphia, including five common in Harlem. Perhaps the best known is:

> --At least my mother ain't no railroad track, laid all over the country.

Such forms frequently occur as simple similes, such as

> --Your mother's like a police station--dicks going in and out all the time.

Although puns such as these seem to have been part of the original dozens tradition, they are no longer common among adolescents in Harlem. They seem to have been adopted by white groups, in the city, where they are quite well known. When our white interviewers used some of these in sounding sessions, they were admired, but they did not initiate a series of other sounds as in the case of "Your momma drink pee" or "Your mother raised you on ugly milk" (see above).

Ritual insults among white peer groups. While some elements of the dozens and other Negro ritual insults have appeared among white peer groups in the urban centers, the typical forms used among whites are quite different from those of Negroes. The personal experience of several of our own investigators (Paul Cohen and Benji Wald) drawn from different areas of New York City, shows firm agreement on ritual insults. Whereas the NNE practice of sounding ranges over a wide variety of forms and topics which are combined with great flexibility, the white forms are essentially a limited set of routines. Two of the most common begin with "Eat shit":

A: Eat shit.
B: What should I do with the bones?
A: Build a cage for your mother.
B: At least I got one.
A: She *is* the least.

A: Eat shit.
B: Hop on the spoon.
A: Move over.
B: I can't, your mother's already there.

These are indeed ritual and impersonal insults, directed in part against the opponent's mother. But the sequencing occurs in a fixed form, and there is little room for individual choice. These are essentially "snappy answers" which show how knowledgeable rather than how competent the speaker is. It is the aptness of the rejoinder which is looked for:

A: Kiss my ass.
B: Move your nose.

A: Fuck you.
B: Yeh, that would be the best one you ever had.

A: You motherfucker.
B: Your mother told.

A: Got a match?
B: My ass against your face.

These are trick responses. The first speaker may say something aggressive (but not particularly clever) or he may be tricked into a routine such as:

A: How tall are you?
B: Five foot seven.
A: I didn't think shit piled that high.

On the other hand, NNE sounds are symmetrical. The first speaker's sound may or may not be a strong one, but the second speaker responds in the same kind (see below).

The white groups also use a certain number of comparisons of the "You are so X that Y" type: "You're so full of shit your eyes are brown." Furthermore, there are similes directed against one's mother that overlap those cited under (b): "Your mother so low she could play handball on a curve...walk under a pregnant cockroach without stooping."

The white material is limited in content as well as form and quantity. Shit is the most common topic, and in general the insults are based on the taboo words rather than taboo activities. One does not find the proliferation of odd and bizarre elements and the wide range of choice characteristic of the NNE forms. Furthermore, this activity does not occupy any considerable time for the white groups--in a word, it is not a speech event for white groups in the sense that sounding is a speech event for the Negro groups.

Attributes and persons sounded on. A review of the content of the sounds given above under (a-j) will show that a wide but fairly well-defined range of attributes is sounded on. A mother (grandmother, etc.) may be cited for her age, weight (fat or skinny), ugliness, blackness, smell, the food she eats, the clothes she wears, her poverty, and of course her sexual activity. As far as persons are concerned, sounding is always thought of as talking about someone's mother. But other relatives are also mentioned--as part of the search for variety in switching, or for their particular attributes. In order of importance, one can list the opponent's relatives as: mother, father, uncle, grandmother, aunt. As far as number of sounds is concerned, the opponent himself might be included as second most important to his mother, but proverbially sounds are thought of as primarily against relatives. The "Signifying Monkey" stirs up the lion with a whole series of reports that the elephant had sounded on him:

"Mr. Lion, Mr. Lion, there's a big burly motherfucker
comin' your way,
Talks shit about you from day to day."

The monkey successively reports that the elephant had talked about the lion's sister, brother, father and mother, wife and grandmother.

"The monkey said, "Wait a minute, Mr. Lion", said,
"That ain't all,"
He said, "Your grandmother," said "she was a lady
playin' in the old backyard,
Said evertime he seen her, made his dick get on the
hard.

Even more relatives are brought in, which bring the monkey to the inevitable conclusion:

He said, "Yeah he talked about your aunt, your uncle
and your cousins,
Right then and there I knew the bad motherfucker
was playin'the dozens."

What is said about someone's mother's age, weight, or clothes can be a general or traditional insult, or it can be local and particular. The presence of commercial tradenames in the sounds is very striking: Bosco, Applejacks, Wonder Bread, Dog Yummies, Gainesburgers, Gravy Train, as well as the names of the popular figures in the mass media; James Bond, Pussy Galore, Flipper. The street culture is highly local, and local humor is a very large part of sounds. As noted before, one of the best ways to start a loud discussion is to associate someone with a local character who is an "ultra-rich" source of humor. Trade names have this local character--and part of the effect is the superposing of this over-specific label on the general, impersonal figure of "your mother" as in "Your mother look like Flipper." Local humor is omnipresent and overpowering in every peer group--it is difficult to explain in any case, but its importance cannot be ignored.

The odd or whimsical use of such specific names can be illustrated by a sequence that occurred when John Lewis left the microbus at an early stop. As a parting shot, he leaned back in the window and shouted genially "Faggots! Motherfuckers!" This set up a chain of responses including a simple "Your mother!" from Rel, "You razor blade bastard!" from someone else, and finally an anonymous "Winnie the Pooh!" One can only say that although this last stroke of inspiration defies systematic analysis at the moment, it does depend heavily upon the incongruity of superimposing the highly specific on the abstract.

Another striking feature of the content of sounds is that obscenity does not play as large a part as one would expect from the character of the original dozens. Many sounds are obscene in the full sense of the word. The speaker uses as many "bad" words and images as possible--that is subject to taboo and moral reprimand in adult middle-class society. Furthermore, the originator will search for images that would be considered as disgusting as possible from this viewpoint: "Your mother eat fried dick-heads". It is true that with long familiarity the vividness of this image disappears, and one might contend that it is not disgusting or obscene to the sounders. But the meaning of the sound and the activity would be entirely lost without reference to these middle-class norms. Many sounds are good because they are "bad"--because the speakers know that they would arouse disgust and revulsion among those committed to the "good" standards of middle-class society. Like the toasts, sounds derive their meaning from the opposition between two major sets of values: their way of being "good" and our way of being "bad".

The rhymed dozens are all uniformly sexual in character, aimed at the sexual degradation of the object sounded on. But the large body of sounds cited above depart widely from this model. Less than half of them could be considered obscene, in any sense. At one point in the Jet session, there is a sequence of three sounds concerning fried dick-heads (discussed below under sequencing). This is immediately followed by

--Your mother eat rat heads.
--Your mother eat Bosco.
--Your mother look that taxi driver.

--Your mother stinks.
--Hey Willie got on a talkin' hat.
--Your mother a applejack-eater.
--Willie got on a talkin' hat.
--So, Bell, your mother stink like a bear.
--Willie mother. . . she walk like a penguin.

Then there follows a sequence of portraits of Willie's mother standing on the corner soliciting men. The entire sequence of nine remarks quoted contains no sexual references, and the strongest word is stink. Many sounds depend upon the whimsical juxtaposition of a variety of images, upon original and unpredictable humor which is for the moment quite beyond our analysis. But it can be noted that the content has departed very far from the original model of uniform sexual insult.

Evaluation of sounds. One of the most important differences between sounding and other speech events is that most sounds are evaluated overtly and immediately by the audience. In well-structured situations, like the Thunderbird sounding session, this is true of every sound. In wilder sessions with a great many participants, like the Jet session in the Microbus, a certain number of sounds will follow each other rapidly without each one being evaluated, although a great many are.

The primary mark of positive evaluation is laughter. We can observe the effectiveness of a sound in a group session by the number of members of the audience who laugh. In the Thunderbird session, there were five members; if one sounded against the other successfully, the other three would laugh; a less successful sound showed only one laugh, or none. Here the value of having a separate recording track for each speaker is very great indeed.

A successful sound will be evaluated by overt comments: In the Jet session, the most common forms are: "Oh!" "Oh shit!", "God damn!" or "Oh lord!" By far the most common is "Oh shit!" The intonation is important: when approval is to be signalled the vowel of each word is quite long, with a high sustained initial pitch, and a slow-falling pitch contour. The same words can be used to express negative reaction, or disgust, but then the pitch is low and sustained. The implication of the positive exclamations is "That is too much" or "That leaves me helpless".

Another, even more forceful mode of approving sounds is to repeat the striking part of the sound oneself: In the Jet session for example:

John L.: Who father wear raggedy drawers?

Willie: Yeh the ones with so many holes in them when-a-you walk they whistle?
Rel: Oh. . shi-it! When you walk they whistle! Oh shit!

The implication of helplessness before the strength of the sound is not always an exaggeration. During the Thunderbirds session, a staff member injected a sound taken from a play about a white New York City group of the 1930's--"Dead End Kids". The effect was novel and original enough to produce a powerful reaction among the Thunderbirds :

WL:(to Boot) Your grandmother wears army shoes.
Roger: Oh lawwd!
Ricky: [claps hands and begins to laugh. . . .]
Money [laughing]. . . . .]

Roger: A haw, ha oho, oh army grandmo--xx army shoes!
Money: [laughing]. . . . .]
Ricky: [laughing]. . . . .]

Roger: Oh lawd! Hey Ricky, you [xxhold it]
Boot:(to WL) Alright, awright, huh alright, huh, (least my mother ain't least my mother ain't got combat boots in the back alley. .)
Money: Awwwxxx that's a funny x x x boy xxx x..
Ricky: [laughing] . . . .]

Three of the four members of the audience respond strongly to the original sound. Boot answers with an "at least" form, drawing on the nearest NNE equivalent (cf. "I saw the roaches walkin' round in combat boots" above), but the sustained laughter is still directed at the original sound. Ricky in particular was most strongly affected: as noted by Roger, Rickey was falling off his chair. He lay on the floor, laughing continuously. The group notes that Ricky's behavior was exceptional.

Roger: Ricky killin' hisself on the ground. Hey Ricky, don't kill your damn self.
Boot: Ricky father got shot by his own fot.[fart]
Money: Hey Ricky come up.

Ricky's helpless laughter continued, however, for one minute and forty seconds.

Negative reactions to sounds are common and equally overt. The most fequent is phony: "Tha's phony!", "Phony shit!" But sounds are also disapproved as *corny*, *weak* or *lame*. Stanley, the president of the Jets, elaborates his negative comments quite freely:

Junior: Aww, Nigger Bell, you smell like B. O. Plenty.
Bell: Aww, nigger, you look like--you look like Jimmy Durante's grandfather.
Stan: Aw, tha's phony [bullshit]. . . Eh, you woke me up with that phony one, man. . .
Bell: Junior look like Howdy Doody.
Stan: That's phony too, Bell. Daag, boah! . . Tonight ain't your night, Bell.

At another point, Stanley denounces a sound with a more complicated technique: "Don't tell 'im those phony jokes, they're so phony, you got to laugh."

The difference between these negative terms is not clear. For our present purposes, we may consider them equivalent, although they are probably used in slightly different ways by different speakers.

These evaluative remarks are ways of responding to the over-all effect of a sound. There is also considerable explicit discussion of sounds themselves. In the case of a traditional sound, like a rhymed dozen, one can object to an imperfect rendition. For example, Stevie answers one of our versions with "Tha's wrong! You said it wrong! Mistake!" Members are also very clear on who the best sounders are. Among the Thunderbirds, it is generally recognized that "Boot one of the best sounders. . . he's one of the best sounders of all." This very reputation will interfere with the chances of getting other members to initiate sounding--they know in advance that they will be outdone. In general, sounding is an activity very much in the forefront of social consciousness: members talk a great deal about it, try to make up new sounds themselves, and talk about each other's success. Sounding practices are open to intuitive inspection. It is possible to ask a good sounder, "What would you say if somebody said to you. . ." and he will be glad to construct an answer. Members will also make meta-comments on the course of a sounding session: "Now he's sounding on you, Money!!" or announce their intentions, as Roger does: "Aw, tha's all right. Now I'm gonna sound on you pitiful."

Furthermore, members take very sharp notice of the end result of a sounding contest, as noted below. In a sounding session, everything is public--nothing significant happens without drawing comment. The rules and patterning of this particular speech event are therefore open for our inspection.

The activity of sounding. We can distinguish two very different uses of sounds: (1) ritual sounding and (2) applied sounding. The quotations given above are taken from sounding sessions which are examples of the first: rituals in which the sounding is done for its own sake.

Applied sounding involves the use of sounds for particular purposes in the midst of other verbal encounters, and follows a very different set of rules. We will consider ritual sounding first, beginning with the general rules which apply, and then the operation of these rules in the two sessions which have been cited.

There are three participants in this speech event: antagonist A, antagonist B, and the audience. A sounds against B; the audience evaluates; B sounds against A; and his sound is evaluated. The general structure is then more complex than most ABABAB exchanges: it is

A-1 e B-1 e A-2 e B-2 e....

A-1 almost always contains a reference to B's mother. B-1 should be based on A-1; to the extent that it is an original or well-delivered transformation of A-1, B may be said to have won. A-2 may be an entirely new sound. But if A-2 is a further transformation of B-1, it is usually evaluated even more highly. Whereas we may say that A-2 "tops" B-1 if it is intrinsically better, A may be said to "get" B most often if A-2 is a variant or clearly related to B-1. This is what is meant by "topping" B--the exchange is held open. A skillful sounder can hold an exchange of variants open beyond the point where it would normally be considered ended by conventional estimates. The series may be terminated by one antagonist clearly winning over the other. Thus in that part of the Thunderbirds' session following Ricky's collapse, Boot clearly beats Money. The exchange starts with Boot's long story of how Money was tricked into thinking that a jar of urine was ice tea, and he drank it. Money objects, rather incoherently: "I know you love thuh--ice tea. . I know you love to pee - i - ice cream tea." Boot then begins sounding:

A-1 Boot: His mother go to work without any draws on so
that she c'd get a good breeze.

B-1 Money: Your mother go, your mother go work without any,
anything on, just go neked.
e David: That's a lie.

In the first exchange, Money clearly fails, as evidenced by his hesitation: he simply exaggerates Boot's well-constructed and witty sound without the corresponding wit. David's comment is negative--particularly in that it takes Money's sound to be a factual claim.

A-2 Boot: Your mother, when she go to work and she had--
you know th- toe shoes, well her stockings
reach her be--sweeping the ground.

e {Ricky: [laughs]
e {Roger Ho lawd! [laughs]

Boot's A-2 is stretching the limits of the syntax available to him, and he has considerable difficulty in getting it out. It is clearly an extension of A-1 and B-1, of the form "Your mother go to work with..." But instead of the conventional wit of A-1, or the reduced variant of B-1, A-2 enters the field of the unconventional and absurd. Boot scores two strong responses from Ricky and Roger.

Money cannot build further on the syntactic model, but he does attempt to respond to the theme of holes in shoes. There is no audience response.

B-2 **Money:** Your mother have holes--potatoes in her shoes.

Since Boot has won this exchange, he now begins a new sequence:

A-3 Boot: Your mother got a putty chest[laugh].

B-3 Money: Arrgh! Aww--you wish you had a putty chest, right?

Money responds, but he does not sound. Boot continues with another sound of the "got" type; now however, the pattern is complicated as Roger joins in, sounding specifically against Money. This is a second stage which occurs when one antagonist is clearly losing ground: he becomes the object of group sounding.

A-4 Boot: Your mother got hair growing out her dunkee hole.
C-4 {Roger: Money your mother got a 45 in her left titty.
{Money: Awwww!

e Ricky: [laughter]

Money now responds to Roger's sound with a variant which strikes us as a very able one.

B-4 Money: Your mother got a 45° titty.

Now it is Roger who answers Money, and gets a strong response. Boot then adds a sound which is rather incoherent and gets no response.

C-5 Roger: Your mother got baptised in a whiskey bottle.

e (Money: [laughs]
e {Ricky: [laughs]
e (David: [laughs]

A-5 Boot: Your mother **sail the seven seas in a sardine** can. [laughs]

The situation has become unclear. Sounding is defined for members as one person sounding upon another, but three are involved. Money's laughter indicates that he thinks Roger's sound is not against him, but against Boot. David now explicitly says that the antagonists are Boot and Roger, but Roger denies this: he is still sounding against Money. Boot adds a further dig which recognizes that Roger's him means Money, not Boot.

David: Now you and Roger sounding [laughs].

Roger: I'm sounding on him.
Boot: That half of a motor.[laughs]

Given the sanction of a group attack against Money, David now begins his own. But Money turns to us suddenly and says "Can we sing now?" (The formal recording of singing was one of the purposes of the session). Money's question is interpreted as a transparent attempt to escape, and a storm of abuse descends on his head from the leaders of the group. He is forced to acknowledge his defeat explicitly.

D-6 David: Everytime Money looks at the moon, everytime
Money: Could we sing now?
Boot: [laughs]
Roger: [laughs]

David: Money look at moon, he say "Ooo, look at the moonshine
Roger: He changing the subject!
Ricky: Awww! Tryin' to change thuh -ih -subject!

Roger: What's the matter, you feeling all right, or you want some more sounding?
Money: Uh-uh.

The sounding session goes on, with Money saying nothing. When he speaks up later on, Ricky says "Hey Money, you better keep quiet, if you don't want 'em soundin' bad on you." It should be quite clear that there are winners and losers in sounding sessions.

The speech event we call sounding is not isolated from other forms of verbal interaction: it can merge with them or become transformed into a series of personal insults. When ritual insult changes into personal insult, the difference between the two becomes quite clear. We take as an instance the beginning of the sounding session with the Thunderbirds. To save space, evaluative reactions to each sound will be put in brackets after it.

In this session, we can observe the difficulty that members have in distinguishing between hypothetical and actual sounding. The question "What would you say if.." is quickly transformed into actual sounding. The series was initiated by an effort of C. Robins to get Money to sound.

CR: (to Money) What would you say if Boot said "Your father look like Funjie!"? [Roger: "Oh Lord, oh Money. . oh ho. . Funjie. . ooo!" Roger, Boot, Ricky, David: laugh].

Money: Hunh?

CR; That's like Funjie's your father. [Roger: Ohh! Boot, Ricky: laugh]

Boot: He's sounding on you, Money!

CR: No, no, if Boot said it...

At this point, other staff members join in and try to make it clear that we are only asking what Money would say if. Money tries to answer, but Boot takes over with the support of the rest of the group. Our efforts to push Money to the fore do not succeed.

David: Boot one of the best sounders.

Money: I say, uh - uhm -

Boot: Now if you said that to me. . .

CR: No no no no, you sound him, tell him, say say that. . .

Money: He's one of the best sounders of all.

CR, WL: Money sounds good too.

Boot: Now if he said that to me, know what I'd say? I'd say--

Boot is irrepressible. Money's failure to sound well in the face of Boot's dominant position is precisely the same phenomenon that W. F. Whyte observed in Doc's corner gang (1955). Followers did not bowl as well against the leader of the group as they could by themselves. In other situations we have seen Money sound very well.

"B-1" Boot: I'd say, "His father got four lips."

"A-2" Money: I'd say, "Your mother got four lips." [Boot: "That ain't nothin'." CR: "What does that mean?"]

Boots sound hits on the familiar topic of thick lips, part of the self-derogatory pattern of NNE. (cf. Jets: "Your father got lips like a--Oldsmobile.") Money's hypothetical A-2 is the weakest kind of switch: substitution of one relative for another, and it is properly and immediately derogated. Money has failed again. The part of second antagonist is now taken up by David: a small, fat boy who is continually being pushed aside by Boot and is the constant butt of jokes. On the other hand, he has a great deal of courage, and unlike others in the group, never gives up in the struggle to establish his position, and never allows Boot to dominate the situation entirely. We will examine the group verbal dynamics in more detail in 4.3. In the following sounding session, Boot applies his verbal skill with ruthless force to crush David, but David's verbal resources are greater than one would have predicted.

"A-3" David: So your. . So then I say, "Your father got brick teeth."

B-3 Boot: Aw your father got teeth growing out his behind. [Money, Ricky, Roger laugh].

Boot's response is a clear example of a winning effort. He takes David's hypothetical A-3, and adds to it elements of absurdity and obscenity that obtain positive evaluation from all three members of the audience. Note that Boot's sound is no longer hypothetical: it is the first "real sound" of the series. David attempts to top this by staying with the "behind" theme, but he fails to get a coherent thought out. He is not fluent in this area, at least in the face of Boot's ability.

A-4 David: Yeah, your father, y- got, your father grow, uh, uh, grow hair from, from between his, y'know. [Money laughs].

B-4 Boot: Your father got calluses growin' up through his ass, and comin' through his mouth. [Boot, Money and Ricky laugh].

Boot builds further on the original model, and crushes David with a display of virtuosity that leaves him with nothing to say. Boot is not willing to leave it there; like many a good sounder, he can seize his advantage by piling one sound on another. He switches abruptly to

B-4' Boot: Your father look like a grown pig. [Boot, Money and Ricky laugh].

David wants to respond, and he reaches out for a sound which breaks the rules. It is not a ritual insult at all, but a personal remark that hits on a failing of Boot's step-father.

a-5 David: Least my--at least my father don't be up there
talking uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-uh.

The fact that this is a personal insult and not a ritual insult is shown by the fact that Boot answers it. Since ritual insults are not intended as factual statements, the allegations of sounds are not denied. But Boot vigorously responds to David's taunt. Roger's comment acknowledges that Boot has been hit.

Boot: Uh-so my father talks stutter talk what it
mean? [Roger: He talk the same way a
little bit.]

Now Boot responds to David's insult with a comparable one, which is related to A-5 in exactly the way that one sound is related to another. Boot's father stutters; David's father is old and has gray hair: a simple fact, but Boot makes a great deal of it.

A-6 Boot: At least my father ain't got a gray head!
His father got a big bald spot with a gray
head right down there, and one long string...

David is hurt, and he too feels it necessary to deny the personal insult. But Boot doesn't stop: he picks up the point of "one long string" and grinds it in over and over, to the amusement of Roger and Money.

David: Because he'old, he's old, that's why! He's old,
that's why!..
Boot: ...and one long string, that covers his whole
head, one, one long string, about that high,
covers his whole head. [Roger: ho lord,
one string! Money, Boot laugh].

Boot brings tears to David's eyes. Boot's side-kick Money does not mind, but Ricky objects.

David: You lyin' Boo!... You know 'cause he old,
tha's why!
Ricky: Aw man, cut it out.

Boot has won the day, but he has no sense of restraint. He now returns to ritual sounding: his next insults are not intended as allegations of fact, but David continues to take them as personal.

What follows now is no longer the controlled counterpoint of sounding, of the form A e B e, but rather an excited argument, in which both parties are in strident overlap most of the time. It is mostly David against Boot now: Boot's insults do not draw much response from the others, and one can sense the group support ebbing from him.

B-7 Boot: Your father look like this--with his butt coming out, and he go [slurp] he look like...

David: You a liar!

B-8 Boot: You know one time I came over his house, I saw some slop in the garbage, you know, and then, and I left it there, and David say, David say [slurp, chomp, chomp, chomp] [Money laughs].

David is ready to take up any weapon at hand. He seizes upon the poverty theme, and a personal charge that hits home. It takes some time for David to be heard: finally Boot stops his chomping effect to issue a vigorous (but ineffective) denial.

A-9 David: So! and you always come over my house and say, yeah, Boot always come over my house and say, Boot always coming over my house to eat. He aks for food, and Ohhh lawww...
Boot: I don't come over your house--I don't come nuttin! I only come over your house on school days and from now on I do.

David senses his advantage and pursues it.

David: ..and when we go swimmin', we go, you aks for food, and ever ti--and you come over my house-

Boot can no longer deny the factual truth of David's charge, but he attempts to mitigate the facts: foolishly perhaps, because David is ready with a crushing rejoinder.

Boot: Yeah, I only be playin', I only be playin'!
David: *Yeah, but you sure be eatin'*!

Not every story ends with the underdog showing as well as David. David's momentary success is all the more striking because Boot is without doubt in verbal control of the group. As we have seen, Boot continues his triumphant progress sounding against others, in no way daunted by this reversal. In these extracts, we have the full weight of evidence for the important point that Boot is *the verbal leader* of the Thunderbirds--that he excells at all the verbal skills of the NNE sub-culture. It is not only that Boot has a larger store of sounds at his disposal, and can draw upon them more readily. His syntax is also more complex; and he can deliver sounds that no one else can. All of the more complex examples from the Thunderbirds cited above are those of Boot.

The rules for ritual sounding. In the presentation of sounding so far, we have seen that this speech event has a well articulated structure. These rules can be broken: it is possible to hurl personal insults and it is possible to join in a mass attack on one person. But there is always a cost in stepping out of the expected pattern--in the kind of uncontrolled and angry response which occurs, or in the confusion as to who is doing what to whom.

As we examine these examples of sounding, the fundamental opposition between ritual insults and personal insults emerges. The appropriate responses are quite different: a personal insult is answered by a denial, excuse or mitigation, whereas a sound or ritual insult is answered by another sound. Sounds are then necessarily chained into longer sequences, since a sound and its response are essentially the same kind of thing, and a response calls for a further response. The complexity of sounding is actually the result of this comparatively simple structure, so that our semantic diagram of sounding might be reduced to:

S-1 e S-2 e S-3 . . .

On the other hand, personal insults produce dyads of interaction: insult (I) and denial or excuse (D). We observe a chain in this last exchange between Boot and David:

$$I_A \quad D_B \quad I_B \quad D_A \quad I_A \quad D_B . . .$$

but there is no inherent, structural reason for chaining as in the case of sounds.

There is a Type I, invariant rule operating here which is not subject to violation. What is normal and automatic for a personal insult is unthinkable with sounds. We have the exchanges A: *You come over to my house and ask for something to eat*. B: *I do not*! and A: *Your father got grey hair and one long string*.. B: *That's cause he's old, that's why*! But we do not have such exchanges as A: *Your momma drink pee*. B: **That's a lie*! Instead the response is *Your father eat shit*. If this was merely a Type II, semi-categorical rule we would expect joking responses with denials, deliberate misinterpretations of the sounds, parallel to those we sometimes hear with requests: *Would you mind opening the window*? *No*. *Can you give me the time*? *Yes*. Since responses to sounds are so automatic and deep-seated, we must pre-suppose a well-formed competence on the part of members to distinguish ritual insults from personal insults. On the face of it, it does not seem easy to make this distinction. It is a question, among other things, of how serious the antagonist is: does he want to start a fight? does he mean it? are people going to believe this is true? What is the internal competence which allows Boot to recognize immediately David's personal insult, and to respond with a denial? How can the Jets sound on each other for hours without anyone being insulted?

To answer this question, it is necessary to specify more precisely the structure of sounds. The superficial taxonomy given above under (a-j) merely charts the differences in the syntactic forms of sounds as they are uttered. If sounds are heard as one kind of utterance, there must be a uniform mode of interpretation which shows all of these forms as derived from a single underlying structure. We propose that this structure is

T(B) is so X that P

where T is the target of the sound, X is the attribute of T which is focussed on, and P is a proposition that is coupled with the attribute by the quantifier *so...that* to express the degree to which T has X. The target T(B) is normally B's mother or other relative. (It may seem as if there are more complex targets such as "Your mother's clothes" or "Your mother's face" but these may best be seen as derived from constructions such as "Your mother is so ugly that her face...") The attribute X is drawn from the range of features or topics outlined above: age, weight, clothes, etc. It is limited to a specifically *pejorative* value: *age* is specifically *old*, *weight* is *skinny* or *fat*, *clothing* is *ragged* or *dirty*, *appearance* is *ugly* or *dirty*, *sexual behavior* is *loose* or *immoral*; *smell* is *stink*, *wealth* is *poor*, *food* is *poor* or *disgusting*. The proposition P may have a wide variety of forms, although there are lower-level sequencing rules and standards of excellence that govern its form. Thus we have a typical sound, *Your mother* [T(B)] *so old* [X], *she fart dust*. [P].

It will be observed that there are a great many sounds with simpler forms than this, and some that are more complex. We might consider that the simpler forms such as *Your mother the Abominable Snowman* are derived from a full form *T(B) is so X that P* by rules of deletion parallel to syntactic rules for ellipsis. However, it seems more plausible to write discourse rules for making sounds indirectly, parallel to the rules for making commands or requests. One can make commands by statements which mention only the conditions or pre-conditions for such commands. Thus someone can request a glass of water by stating that he is thirsty. A sound may be made by simply stating the proposition *P*. The deletion of *T(A) is so X that*. . is recoverable in the interpretation of the listener, who has the competence to know what attribute is being sounded on. For example, *Your mother look like Flipper* must be understood as 'Your mother is so ugly that she looks like Flipper,' whereas *Your mother name the Black Boy* will be interpreted as 'Your mother is so black that she is named "Black Boy"'. *Your father got teeth grow-*

ing out his ass is one of many sounds that must refer to an attribute *odd*, *crazy*, or perhaps most literally, *fucked-up*.

Of the simpler forms listed under (a)-(d) above, the only types which offer serious difficulty in this interpretation are the equative forms. Type (a), *Your mother the abominable Snowman* can be understood as either 'Your mother is so ugly that she ~~she~~ looks like the abominable Snowman' or '...that she is named the abominable Snowman.' If one takes a more mystical approach--that the speaker is asserting 'Your mother is in fact the Abominable Snowman'--this is equivalent to saying that the insult is directed against the opponent himself, rather than his (ritual) mother. If we hold the notion that the sound is intended to insult or degrade the opponent's mother, rather than to claim he has an altogether different mother, then the interpretations of 'like' and 'is named' are called for.

Sounds of the (d) *Your mother eat...* type are usually interpreted as referring to the attribute 'poor' (or 'hungry' which may be subsumed under 'poor'). Thus *Your mother eat corn flakes without any milk* may be understood as 'Your mother's so hungry that she eats cornflakes without any milk!' or as "Your mother's so poor that she has to eat cornflakes without any milk."

On the other hand, the following sequence of sounds must be given a different interpretation:

--His mother eat Dog Yummies...

--Somebody said your mother's breath smell funny.

--They say your mother eat Gainesburgers.

--They say your mother was a Gravy Train.

These are plainly based on the traditional mode of insulting someone's mother by calling her a *dog*. The direct insults *Your mother's a bitch*.. *a dog*.. *You're a son of a bitch* do not have any weight in sounding today. But the existence of this model makes it plain that the underlying interpretation is not 'Your mother is like a dog' or 'Your mother is named *dog*' but rather 'Your mother is a dog'. On the other hand, Boot's sound *Your father looks like a grown pig* is not equivalent to saying *Your father is a pig...a swine!* but rather must be taken to mean 'Your father is so fat that he looks like a grown pig.'

The type (e) *Your mother raised you on ugly milk* is unique in this series, because it must be interpreted as a sound directly against the opponent: '*You* are so ugly that your mother [must have] raised you on ugly milk'. But we might add that the mother is also being insulted here, so that the sound adds in effect 'and it's your mother's fault!'

The more complex sounds such as the anecdotal (f) I went to B's house.. type must be taken as directed against the whole family: 'B's family is so poor that...'

On the other hand, complex comparisons such as Your father drawers have so many holes in them that when he walk they whistle can be interpreted as 'Your father's drawers are so ragged that...' or as one step further, 'Your father is so ragged that his drawers have so many holes in them that when he walks they whistle'.

There are, of course, a certain number of miscellaneous sounds which are difficult to interpret in any scheme: Your mother play dice with the midnight mice is many-ways ambiguous.

It is clear that the formal definition given does not include the rhymed dozens, which have the underlying structure I fucked your mother so much that... A number of other sounds, such as I took your mother are based upon this model in which the sounder asserts that he sexually insulted or degraded the opponent's mother. This model must be added as an alternative mode of sounding to the one outlined above. But the great majority of sounds used by the Jets, Cobras and Thunderbirds fit the T(B) is so X that P model. We must presuppose that members have the competence to make such interpretations if we are to explain their behavior. We can now write rules for sounding that will account for the interpretation of a sound and selection of an appropriate response to it. The following rule (1) begins with the listener B's position, as he hears what is said and interprets it to decide what has been done.

> (1) If A makes an utterance S in the presence of B and an audience C, which includes reference to a target related to B, T(B), in a proposition P, and
>
> (a) B believes that A believes that P is not true and
>
> (b) B believes that A believes that B knows that P is not true...
>
> then S is a sound, heard as T(B) is so X that P where X is a pejorative attribute, and A is said to have sounded on B.

This rule can (and must) be abbreviated by identifying conditions (a) and (b) as conditions for shared or social knowledge. These are only the first of an infinite series of recursive conditions which represent the fact that there is shared knowledge between A and B that P is not true. In the terminology of discourse analysis now being developed, an A-event is one known to be known only to A [in A's biography] and a B-event is one known to be known only to B, whereas an AB-event is one known to be known to both. We may summarize conditions (a) and (b) as it is an AB event that P is not true.

The audience C is an essential ingredient here. It is true that one person can sound against another without a third person being present, but the pre-supposition that this is public behavior can easily be heard in the verbal style. Sounds are not uttered in a direct, face-to-face conversational mode. The voice is raised and projected, as if to reach an audience. In a two-person sounding situation, the antagonists treat each other as representing the audience.

Note that rule (1) does not require the attribute X or to be explicitly mentioned. On the other hand, the proposition P must be present. We rarely hear sounds of the form T(B) is (Q)X where Q is a simple quantifier, and it is doubtful if they are to be classified as sounds. Your mother is very fat; your father is real black are not heard as sounds. Indeed, we can explain the non-deletability of P as we return to the question of the conditions for recognizing sounds as opposed to personal insults. The rule (1) is designed to answer the original question: how does B recognize a ritual insult? First, he recognizes an appropriate target. Secondly, he recognizes the sounding situation: a remark is made by A in a loud voice designed to be heard by the audience C. Thirdly, he judges the proposition P to be appropriate to a ritual insult in that everyone present plainly knows that it is not true. The Jets' mothers do not look like Flipper or Howdy Doody; they are not the Abominable Snowman; they do not eat Dog Yummies or fried dick-heads. Furthermore, it is a matter of human competence to know that everyone knows that these propositions are not true. On the other hand, the attributes X may justly be attributed to one's mother: she may very well be fat, or skinny, or ugly, or black, or poor, or old. If the proposition P were deleted, the ritual insult would become a personal insult. Your family is poor! is not a ritual insult, but a personal one. We have noted that Boot's stepfather does stutter; David's father is old and has gray hair--and all the Thunderbirds know this.

Outsiders would of course be able to recognize ritual propositions P, but without the shared knowledge of members as to whose family was poor, which family was poorest, and which mother was blackest, the outsider could not as readily recognize a personal insult. He would have to suspend judgment. The group does not share all knowledge equally, and sounding is not confined within a single peer group or hang-out group. Therefore sounds must be recognized as ritual insults in themselves, without pre-supposing any specific knowledge of the sounder's family. For this reason, the propositions P tend to become more and more bizarre and unlikely. Your mother so low she c' play Chinese handball on a curve (curb) is a safe sound. Nobody is that low. On the other hand, there is something dangerously personal in Your mother look like his father, boy; 'n' you know how he look, boy. There is one exception to the rule that P cannot be deleted, and that is Your mother stink; if the word stink had not achieved ritual status by being reserved for insults, this might be a dangerously marginal case. But if one reviews the sounds quoted above, it will be immediately obvious in almost every case that the propositions P are known to be untrue.

The same argument applies to the rhymed dozens. Among young adults, to say I fucked your mother is not to say something obviously untrue. But it is obviously untrue that "I fucked your mother from tree to tree / Your father said, 'Now fuck me!'". The situation can become difficult in some neighborhoods. In the Puerto Rican barrio of East 111th Street, it is a common sound to say "Your mother's on Fifth Avenue!" meaning that she is a prostitute. To the question, "What about the kids whose mothers are on Fifth Avenue!" members reply "They don't say much."

First it is worth noting that P can be deleted if X is also missing; we then have Your mother! This is a very common sound; as cited above,

John Lewis:	Faggots!! Motherfuckers!!
Rel:	Your mother!

Here of course there is unrecoverable deletion--that is, there is no X or P that can be reconstructed. We can interpret Your mother as signaling either a generalized insult, or as referring to the intention to sound on someone. It may also be used in public places as an elliptical form where behavior is not as free as normally. We observe the following sequence used by two ten-year-olds entering a delicatessen:

--Your mother!
--Your father!
--Your uncle!

We can now give rule (2) for responding to a sound.

(2) If A has sounded on B, B sounds on A by asserting a new proposition P' which includes reference to a target related to A, T(A), and such that it is an AB-event that P' is untrue. P' may be embedded in a sentence as a quantification of a pejorative attribute X of T(A).

There is an interesting condition here on P' which is that If X' ≠ X, then P' ≠ P In other words, if A says, Your mother so old she fart dust, B cannot say Your mother so skinny she fart dust, or Your mother so black she fart dust. But if X' = X, then it is possible for P' = P, if the target T is shifted, although this is the weakest kind of response. Among young children who do not sound well, one will hear such sequences as:

--Your mother got funky drawers.
--Your father got funky drawers.

But one does not hear as an answer, "Your mother got funky drawers", for this would be equivalent to a denial of the sound. We can now see why denial of ritual sounds is impossible; for to deny a sound is to admit that it is not a matter of general knowledge that it is obviously untrue, just as to excuse or mitigate the sound is to admit it as factually true.

The description of P as being obviously untrue--that its untruth is an AB event--is equivalent to deciding that the sounder is not 'serious'. This decision must be made in any conversational exchange--whether it is a matter of commands, requests, assertions or sounds--it is the first act of interpretation which the listener must make. As Harvey Sacks has pointed out (1966) there are important consequences of this decision: if the speaker is judged serious, a suitable response must be constructed to fit the situation. If the speaker is joking, then all that is usually required is a laugh--no matter what was said by the first speaker. In the case of sounding, the judgment is made that the speaker is not serious--the insult is a ritual one--but the answer will be governed to a certain extent by the nature of the proposition P. Excellence in sounding, and the winning of the contest, will depend upon the relation of P' to P.

Sequencing in the content of sounds. The rules given in the sub-section above are all that are needed to generate a series of sounds between two antagonists. There are further complications involved when a third person enters the exchange, and when a number of members join in sounding on one antagonist who is falling behind. But sequencing is much more than the fact that speakers take turns and succeed each other: sequencing involves the substance of sounds which succeed each other--how one sound is built on another, and how a series of sounds are brought to a conclusion. Above all, we are concerned with the standards of excellence in sounding--what makes one person a better sounder than another, and how the group evaluates the performance of an individual. This topic will provide us with the best insight into the factors which control the use of language in the street culture. In settings far removed from the classroom, under standards of performance that are alien to those of the school, peer group members develop a high level of competence in syntax, semantics and rhetoric. One part of this competence was seen in the toasts developed by adults: in this discussion of sounding, we will observe the creative use of language by adolescents. We will consider first simple sequences of the type A B, where B builds on A's sound to achieve a greater level of complexity, and may be judged in some sense to have surpassed it.

The extensive selections from the Thunderbirds' session show a number of such A B sequences. We cited:

David: Your father got brick teeth.

Boot: Your father got teeth growin' out his behind.

Note that both sounds feature the same attribute: odd or misshapen appearance, and the same target (relative to the speaker). Boot also preserves the same surface form: that is, in neither sound does the T is so X that... sentence appear. We do not in fact find sequences of the form:

A: Your father got brick teeth

B: Your father got such long teeth that they growin' out his behind.

We also note that the most superficial syntax of the proposition P is preserved: Your father got... Finally, Boot builds his sound on the same specific notion of misshapen teeth that David introduced. But Boot does not limit himself to mere exaggeration, such as Your father got teeth a mile long. Instead, he adds a new theme which combines anal interest with absurdity. We will not attempt to explore here the question of how "original" Boot's effort is. Most sounds are repetitions or re-combinations of elements that have been used before. But it should be clear that sheer memory will not do the trick here, as it will with rhymed dozens. The reply must be appropriate, well-formed, it must build upon the specific model offered. It was observed before that Boot clearly won this round, judging by the response of the audience.

Turning to the Jet session, we find that the targets usually shift more rapidly, since more than two members are involved and there is more overt play to the audience. The sequence A B is illustrated by many examples such as:

A: Eh man, Tommy mother so little, look like she got hit by lightning.

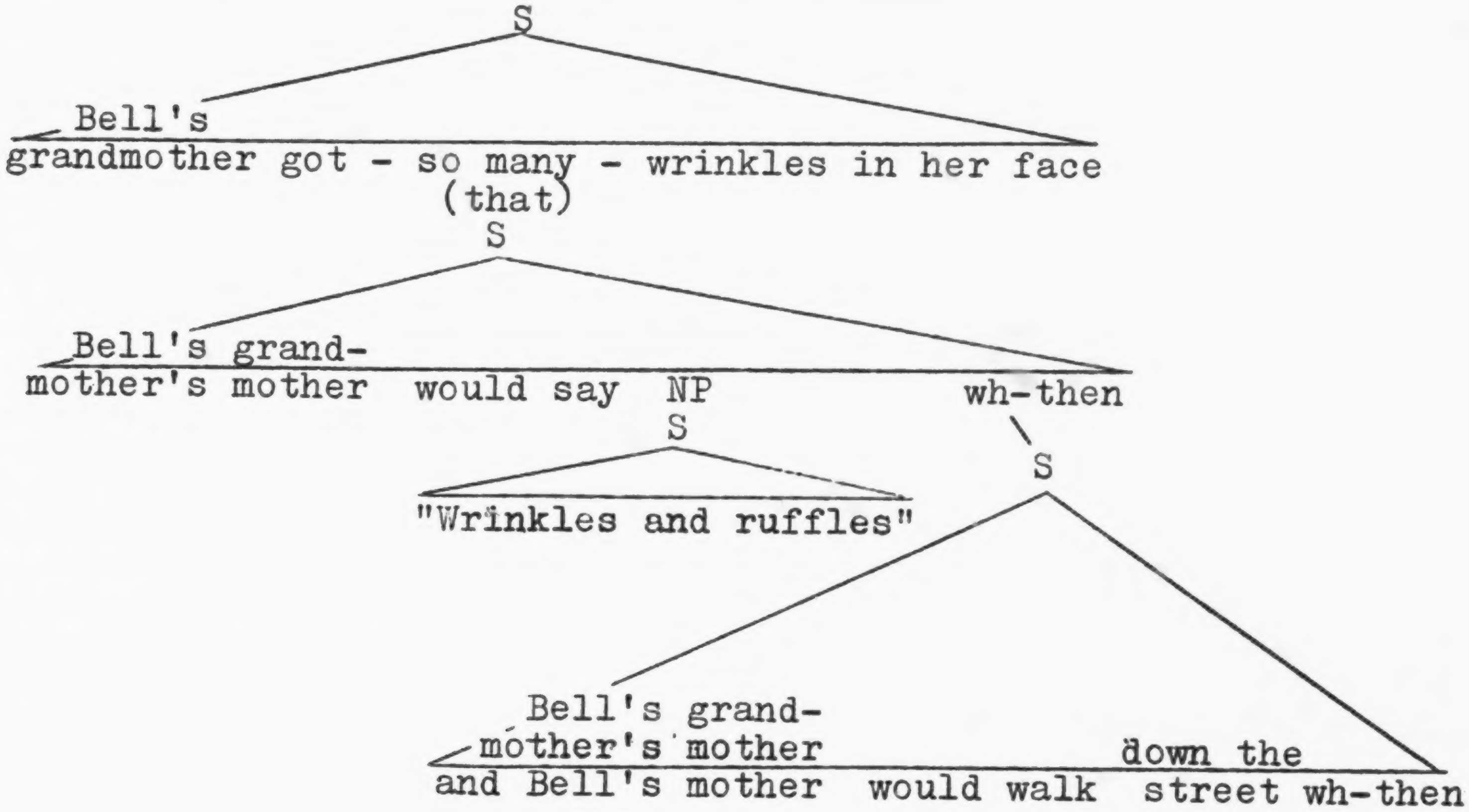
B: Your mother so small, you play hide-and-go seek, y'all c'slip under a penny.

Here the target and attribute are preserved by B, who adds another clause, going far beyond A in syntactic complexity (and apparently to the limits of his syntactic competence). The same pattern prevails when two different sounders are sounding on the same third man.

A: Bell grandmother so-so-so ugly, her rag is showin'.

B: Bell grandmother got so many wrinkles in her face, when they walk down the street, her mother would say, "Wrinkles and ruffles".

In the second sound, the attributes of age and ugliness overlap. The proposition is embedded in a more complex way in the T is so X clause; the embedded P combines three sentences as against the one sentence of the A model, and again shows the left hand embedding which is so rare in colloquial speech. The underlying structure of this sentence is certainly as complex as any we have seen:


S
Bell's grandmother got - so many - wrinkles in her face
(that)
S
Bell's grandmother's mother would say NP
wh-then
S
"Wrinkles and ruffles"
S
Bell's grandmother's mother and Bell's mother would walk down the street wh-then

Most of the sequences in the Jet session are more complex than this, but throughout we see the general pattern that B builds on A. We do not find sequences which reverse this order--in which the same target and attribute are preserved, but in which the proposition P is simpler--as would be the case, for example, if B and A were reversed above.

The complication which B adds is often a semantic one--an additional pejorative attribute is inserted, as in the following:

A: Your mother name Black--Black Boy.

B: Your mother name the Black Bruiser.

The attribute attributed to the target is now not only blackness, but also masculinity or lack of femininity (as in Your mother James Bond.)

When a sound becomes too ordinary--too possible--we can then observe a sudden switch in the pattern of response to that appropriate for a personal insult. This can happen by accident, when a sound is particularly weak. For example, in the Jet session:

A: I went in Junior house 'n' sat in a chair that caved in.

B: You's a damn liar; 'n' you was eatin' in my house, right?

This is the only instance in the Jet sounding session where a statement is denied, and it is plainly due to the fact that the proposition P is not appropriate for a ritual insult. Its untruth is not at all a matter of general knowledge--it is quite possible that a chair in somebody's house would cave in, and that the chair in Junior's house did cave in. It is interesting that Junior takes the same line that David took in countering Boot's personal insult. First Junior denies the charge; second, he hits back with another proposition that is again a personal, not a ritual statement: 'You came over to my house to eat [since there was no food in your own], and so what right have you to complain?' Of course, the second part implicitly contradicts the first--if no chair caved in, how does Junior know what occasion is being talked about? Just as Boot was forced to concede the truth of David's point, so Junior here is plainly speaking of an actual event. There is no immediate response to contradict Junior's last remark. Instead, the theme of sounding is continued, based on A as a first element in the series.

B: I went to Bell's house 'n' a Chinese roach said, "Come and git it."

A: I brought my uncle--I brought my uncle up Junior house: I didn't trust them guys.

Triads. There are many triads in the Jet session, where B tops A, and a third person adds a sound against B. This third sound often has a different target, attribute and/or form of proposition: it is shorter and more pointed, and acts as a coda which terminates the series.

A: Your mother got funky drawers.

B: Your mother got braces between her legs.

C: Looks like your mother did it 'n' ran.

A: Bell mother got a old beat-up boot.

B: Her mother got a face like a rubber ass.

C: Junior got a face like a clown.

In both of these cases, the final sound is contributed with authority by Bell, a senior member of the 100's group. In the second triad, it is Bell who is sounded against by A, and again by B, and Bell who answers as C. A short, firmly-delivered sound of this sort, with heavy stress on the last monosyllable, seems to close off debate effectively. After the first two members of a series, the closing element provided by a third person will usually show formal simplification. Thus we have:

A: Your mother eat coke-a-roaches.

B: Your mother eat fried dick-heads

A: Your mother suck fried dick-heads.

C: His mother eat cold dick-heads.

The theme here from the beginning is 'so hungry that she eats...'; the sounder is engaged in a search for something as disgusting to eat as he can find. B certainly tops A in this respect; note the complex noun phrase with an embedded participle. But A does not lose: he keeps the series open, capitalizing on the sexual element introduced by B. A's reply does not depend upon syntactic complication. In simply changing the verb, he introduces semantic complexity by introducing the implicit attribute of sexual immorality. Sex takes a higher place on the implicit agenda of relevant topics than hunger or poverty, so that we now have to read the sound as 'Your mother is so hot that...' Thus A's reply achieves semantic change with a minimum of formal change. The third man achieves closure by returning to the original verb and shortening the form with a much simpler noun phrase. The absurdity of C's sound is based upon the assertion that the substitution of cold for hot food can be relevant at this stage in the search for disgusting attributes. This is a very low-ranking item on the agenda or relevance which governs discourse. It is a common source of humor to make such a sudden, incongruous claim to reverse the order of relevance.

We have seen that one way to achieve excellence in sounding is to develop complex comparisons with a high degree of left -hand embedding which suspends the final proposition. Another is to learn to close off sequences with short sounds which abruptly change the prevailing form. The third, and perhaps the subtlest method has been illustrated here--bringing about striking semantic shifts with minimal changes of form. This is best illustrated by the following sequence at the very beginning of the Jet session.

John L: I'll take you to the last man.

Junior: I'll take your mother.

Rel: I took your mother.

The initial remark of John Lewis is not a sound; he is simply "louding", or "granning". Junior's counter is a sound of the "dozens" model. The introduction of the target your mother also introduces the sexual meaning of take, so that ambiguity is achieved with a minimum formal change. Rel's final addition seems to us an even more adept example of semantic shift with a minimal effort. By changing from the challenge of the future form to the simple assertion of the past tense, Rel resolves the ambiguity in favor of the sexual meaning. (The semantic machinery operating here is not obvious, but the effect is). As a third element in the series, Rel's sound also fits the pattern of a short, decisive closure.

There are other forms of sounding which use the same targets and attributes, but very different formal structure. For example, questions are not common as sounds, but the following series begins with two:

A: Hey didn't I see. . . shit on your mother bed?

B: A shot gun. . .

C: Did you see me under your mother bed when your father came in?

D: No I saw your uncle.

C: Oh my uncle was there too.

This whole series is positively evaluated by the group with great enthusiasm. But we will not explore the formal side of sounding further in this discussion.

The function of sounding. The discussion so far has focussed on the rule-governed speech event of *ritual* sounding. This activity is carried on as an end in itself, in the sense that it not used instrumentally to further any other overt activity. There are several analyses in print which attempt to unravel the psychological function of sounding for the young Negro boy. Dollard (1939) argues that playing the dozens releases the anxiety of Negro youth, and directs aggression against members of their own group instead of against the more dangerous white group. Abrahams (1962) writes in an even more profoundly psychoanalytic mode. He characterizes the dozens as:

> an early example of the infantile fixation illustrated by the use of agonistic rhymed verbal forms, a neurotic symptom which is observable in many Negro males throughout much of their lives. (1962:209).

This may seem a bit strong, but it must be remembered that writers in this tradition are ready to characterize any extended verbal play by any group in much the same terms, and include a great many literary productions under the same rubric. Abrahams deals primarily with the role of the rhymed dozens.

> Within specific forms, the rules seem to say, "You can insult my family, but don't exceed the rules because we are dealing with something perilously close to real life."

In this approach we agree with Abrahams: that sounds must be clearly marked by some kind of rule so that the attributes sounded on are not heard in their naked or realistic form. Abrahams then points out that the dozens are so marked by the use of conventional formulas, rhyme and metered speech rhythms. Rhyme, he argues, is a type of wit which is easier for the adolescent to use than the freer exchanges of adults, and "eventually the boys' verbal dexterity increases to the point at which they can achieve more through subtlety and innuendo than through rhymes and obvious puns." But rhyme obviously does not play a very important role for the Thunderbirds, Jets and Cobras. They are working within a rule-governed system where there is ample play for syntactic and semantic originality. In assessing the psychological function of the dozens, Abrahams stresses two values. First, that this activity gives boys an opportunity to assert their virility as they grow up in female-dominated households, by insulting and down-grading women (especially the authoritarian mother) and by boasting of sexual achievement. Secondly, the dozens serve as a verbal contest which allows Negro men to triumph with words when other routes to success are barred--a safe arena in which to exercise and practise aggressivemess.

It is difficult to disagree with either of these points, although it is not clear what evidence would prove them right or wrong. Certainly the data which we have presented on toasts as well as sounds shows these two themes running strongly throughout. But in this discussion we are not concerned with speculation as to the underlying psychological effects of sounding. We are concerned with the development of rules of discourse and standards of excellence in this verbal activity, as a sharp contrast to the low level of achievement in school by the same speakers. It should be clear that the development of linguistic skills is heavily determined by the social environment, and that the failure of NNE peer group members in school is primarily the result of an unfavorable social structure in the classroom.

Applied sounding. The linguistic skills which we see operating in ritual sounding are applied in the midst of other speech events for specific ends. We have observed sounding so used in two, partly overlapping functions: (1) to put someone in his social place after he has moved too far forward out of it (2) to resolve a conflict by relieving tension--transforming a personal conflict into a ritual one. These two uses will be illustrated by two sounds applied by Rel in the midst of the second Jet group session.

Among the Jets, Rel is one of the most adept at using sounds in wider social situations. A classic case of the use of a sound to put someone in his place occurred in the following situation. The leaders of the Jets--Stanley, Rednall, Rel and Larry--were engaging in a complex series of verbal maneuvers which involved disruption and rebuke through the use of "bad" and "good " values (see 4.1. and below). The following extract was cited above to illustrate this play on value systems:

Rednall: Let's get some more money, get five dollars and get a bag.

Rel: You ain't gettin' no bag, man!

Stanley: Let's get some o' Rel's _aaasss_!!

Thus Rednall disrupts, Rel rebukes him, and Stanley attacks Rel. Larry then literally grabs Rel's ass, and Rel hits him back immediately.

Rel: (to Larry, quietly) Get offa me, man. Don' never t- Don' never touch me.

Larry: Eh man, why you hit me? . . . why you hit me?
Rel: Ya-ssh! Be quiet boy. You may hit the microphone.

Larry, playing at being innocent, raises his voice for the benefit of the whole group, but Rel speaks directly and seriously to Larry. At this point, 13-year-old Stevie, sitting on the other side of Larry, tries to intervene. He says to Larry:

Stevie: He gon' getchyou with 'is li's. . . he got
    li- he got leg like di - like -

Stevie is ordinarily very fast and fluent with words; but he finds it very difficult to say what he means to these sixteen-year-olds--another example of how power relations can determine the verbal ability available at the moment. Larry turns his head away from Rel just far enough to give Stevie a contemptuous look. And Rel says:

Rel: Aoh, your mother got legs on 'er nose.

Stevie turns in the other direction, and he makes no effort to re-enter the higher status group for some time. Rel's sound is as complete, apt and crushing as Stevie's efforts were bumbling and incomplete. It is a striking case of the verbal"presence of mind" which Rel is able to show in many situations. (For complete text of this sequence, see 4.2.4.)

A second occasion in the same session arose when Rel attempted to quiet the group down. Although Rel's request was addressed primarily to the members from the 200's block at the other end of the table, Stanley decided to challenge Rel's right to command him.

Rel: Shut up, please!

Stanley: . . . . 'ey, you tellin' me?

At this point, Stanley leaned forward, and put his elbow on the table with his long forearm reaching out towards Rel. Rel flicked his hand away.

{Rel: Yes. Your mother's a duck. Get outa here!
{Stanley: Come a li'l closer. Come a li'l

{Rel: Your mother's a duck.
{Stanley: closer an say--

In response to Rel's sound, Stanley withdrew his arm, looked around, and then became involved with Larry's brother Peaches on the other side. We must again consider Rel's sound eminently successful--this time in satisfying Stanley that he could withdraw without pursuing the mock conflict. The degree of seriousness involved in all these conflicts is of course not very high. But within the range of mock disruption, and mock aggression, there is considerable variation in temperature. In channeling his response to Stanley's aggressive posture into a ritual sound, Rel was able to remove the situation from the area of personal conflict into the ritual posture which is not serious by definition.

Note that in both of these cases, the applied sound is short and to the point, similar to the closing forms noted in the triads above. Furthermore, it is remarkable that these sounds produce no sounding in response. Applied sounds are not responded to with other sounds. Instead they are evaluated as performing a specific communication and accepted as such.

For our final example, we turn to the incident which began the Jets' sounding session. Junior, one of the verbal leaders of the 200's block, called out to John Lewis:

> Junior: Hey what's your name! When a we goin' on the next one, KC?

This was out of line in two respects. First, in using "What's your name" with someone whose name was as well known as his own (the same technique is found in the second Jets' group session in sounding between other members of the 200's block). By adding "K.C." (the usual term of address for John Lewis), the insult was only compounded. Secondly, this remark was out of line in that there had been no promise of a second outing, and Junior was showing extreme hubris in demanding it. John Lewis turned around and replied without hesitation:

> John L: Next time you give me some pussy!

There was considerable uproar at this--it was evident to one and all that Junior had been put down decisively. He protested, not with a sound but with a curse: "Suck my peter, you big flat nosed silly bastard!" It is evident that Junior is quick enough with words

Yet Junior could not counter the effectiveness of John Lewis's reply, who bore witness to his own success: "Got you, Junior--got you that time." Immediately afterwards, there took place the series beginning "I'll take you to the last man."

John Lewis's remark cannot be considered a sound of the same type as the forms we have outlined above. It is one of a large class of ritual insults discussed in 4.2.4 which impute homosexuality to the antagonist by indirection. Here it is used in a double function, and catches Junior in a double bind. For if Junior tried to refute the mock ritual charge of homosexuality, then the answer to "When are we going on the next one" is never--then that conclusion would then be his. John Lewis avoids a direct refusal by imposing this involved condition, in an extreme example of "verbal presence of mind", or applied sounding. Those who have not been raised in the tradition, and who have not engaged in the long and arduous practice of such sounding sessions as we have quoted above, can never hope to rise to this level of competence.

In the next section, we will take up this kind of general insult used by John Lewis under the heading of "personal sounding".

4.2.4. Personal and Generalized sounding. The term or activity of sounding is not confined to the ritual insults discussed in the last section. There are many extensions which go beyond the formal structure in which relatives of the opponent are the chief target. When the peer groups are hanging out together, a great deal of time is spent on verbal encounters in which the same type of aggressive exchanges occur, with the same low range of seriousness. In this section, we will briefly consider extensions of the sounding pattern, under the heading of personal and generalized sounding. The discussion will be based upon extracts from the largest group session, Jets II, in which we can observe most clearly verbal behavior controlled by group interaction. Large sections of this session were video-taped, and five minutes in particular were studied intensively for many weeks in the course of this research project. The analysis of this session yields considerable insight into the structure of small group interaction, and particularly the shifting focus characteristic of informal, spontaneous behavior. This topic would require a presentation of many more rules of discourse, and demand a volume in itself; here we will confine the discussion to a brief consideration of the ways in which sounding is extended, without trying to carry the analysis as far as in 4.2.3.

The Jets II session. The second group session with the Jets followed shortly after a confrontation between the Jets and the Cobras in which John Lewis had tried to play a mediating role. But because Stanley's older brother Mickey (well-known and much feared for his fighting ability) appeared for the Jets, John Lewis was **led to** act as spokesman for the Cobras. The Jets were still showing resentment towards him at this point, and some of their disruptive behavior was a result of his having seemed to take the other side. Since the group session took place at Columbia, and it was known that John Lewis was working for Columbia, the resentment appeared as a general tendency to disrupt the focus or organization of the session--to regard John Lewis as representing an authority, and to be "bad" in the face of authority.

The section to be examined occurs when John Lewis tried to end the opening card game, and proceed to a discussion of boxing, of fights in general, and in particular of how the Jets now felt toward the Cobras (a truce had been arranged). There was always a certain amount of resistance whenever we tried to end a card game, but it was much stronger than usual here. It goes without saying that such disruption of the focussed situation gives us the type of data we need, where the interaction among peer group members obscures the formal focus of the gathering and minimizes the influence of the interviewers.

Because ten members of the Jets were present in this session, the total volume and number of people talking at one time was very great. During the section to be examined, the sub-group members of the 200's block sounded continually among themselves, paying no attention to whatever was going on among the others. This interaction would have been lost entirely if only group microphones were used, but since individual lavaliere microphones were used, we have a complete record of what was said. We have here the phenomenon of "private speech in public" carried to an extreme. (See 2.2 for the methods used in group sessions).

The seating arrangement at this session, informally selected by the Jets themselves, is shown in Figure 2-9 from the first volume, reproduced on the following page. The high-status members from the 100's block took the main table, with the older core members in the center. For the relations of the members, and their place in the various hang-out groups of the Jets, see Figure 4-3a and 3b.

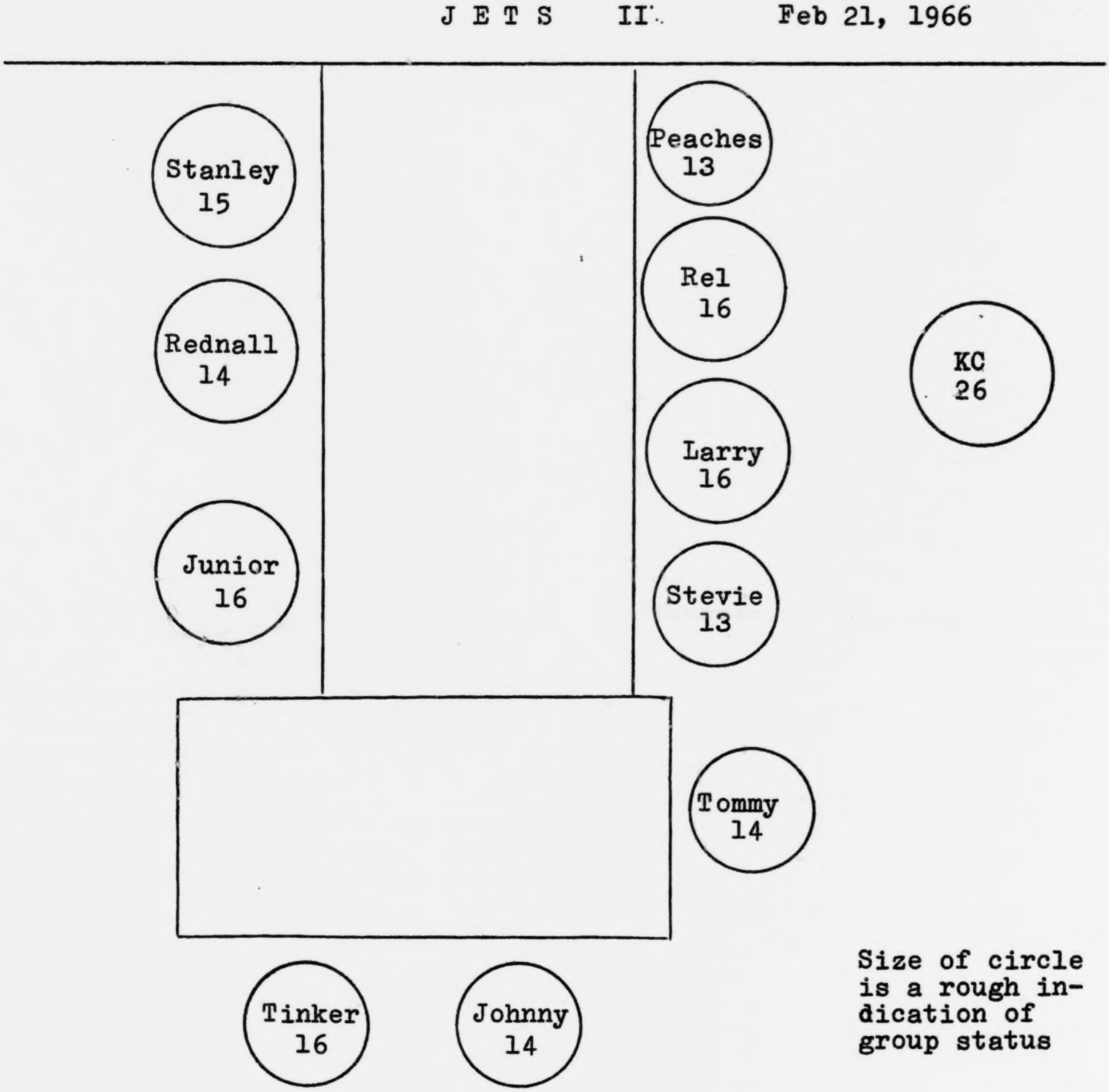
The following four pages show what was said in a small portion of the section studied. The texts are transcribed from individual tracks, for all except Rednall (who took his microphone off) and Tinker, who did not have one; for these two, the text is reconstructed from the several other tracks on which their voices are best heard.

On the group microphone attached to the video-tape recorder, only about half of the utterances of the 100's block can be heard, and almost none from the 200's block. We will turn our attention first to the four members of the lower-status 200's group, seated around the small table at the end: Tinker, Johnny, Tommy and Stevie. Their verbal interaction is entirely separate from the main group, and of a different character, which we will discuss as "personal sounding."

Stevie is among the verbal leaders of the Jets,(as cited several times above); shortly before this card game began, he performed the Jets song before the camera, and won considerable approval from Stanley ("Very goo-o-d, my man!") He is the only member of the 200's block who seems to be recognized at all by the 100's block, and throughout this session he attempts to find a place in the conversation of the main group; he is regularly rebuffed, however, and he therefore oscillates between the two groups.

Tinker is a secondary member, somewhat fat and slow. Johnny and Tommy are more in the middle of the 200's peer group. Johnny dominates the sounding among the three, but in other situations Tommy seems to be the verbal leader.

Figure 2-9. Seating arrangement for second group session with the Jets, HAR-TAG-7.


JETS II
Feb 21, 1966
Stanley 15
Rednall 14
Junior 16
Peaches 13
Rel 16
Larry 16
Stevie 13
KC 26
Tommy 14
Tinker 16
Johnny 14

Size of circle is a rough indication of group status

Notes: Junior, Larry and Peaches are brothers.
Rel is Puerto Rican; Spanish is spoken at home.
Stanley is President, Rednall is Vice-President, Rel is Prime Minister of the Jets.
Tinker, Johnny, Tommy and Stevie are from the 200's block, the rest from the 100's block.
Tinker, Johnny and Tommy sounded against each other through most of the session; Stevie communicated alternately with 100's and 200's group.

KC Awright, man. Card game over. Okay brothers.
CR
Pch
Rel Hey, you like - Hey, look at dat - Hey, quit.
Stn
Reg
Lar
Stv
Jes
Tom
Jhn Blubber Fat-man Tinkerrr!
Tnk

****

KC Card game over. O.K. Brothers. Brothers
CR
Pch OK OK
Rel
Stn
Reg
Lar Card game over!!! (shouting)
Stv
Jes
Tom Say. Blackmaaan!
Jhn Blubberrrr!
Tnk

****

KC put the cards away, Brothers, put the cards back, put
CR
Pch
Rel Now [if] you do- [if] you don't stop, man.
Stn
Reg Peaches.
Lar Card game over!!! (shouting)
Stv Di-di-di-di-di-di-[ta?]!
Jes
Tom
Jhn
Tnk

****

KC the cards back (intoning)
CR
Pch
Rel
Stn
Reg Let's get some more money, get five dollars and get
Lar
Stv Di-di-di-di-di-di- black maaan! (singing)
Jes
Tom
Jhn
Tnk

KC
CR
Pch
Rel You gettin' no bag, man.
Stn Le''s
Reg a bag.
Lar
Stv
Jes
Tom
Jhn 's all right, boah. Da''s
Tnk

****

KC
CR
Pch
Rel (To Larry) Get offa me, man. Don'
Stn get some a Rel' aaass!
Reg
Lar Eh, man, why
Stv
Jes
Tom
Jhn all right. Ya still muh man. x x x Don'' care h- how
Tnk

****

KC
CR
Pch
Rel never t- Don' never touch me.
Stn
Reg
Lar you hit me? Why you hit me?
Stv
Jes
Tom
Jhn many dicks ya suck, ya still muh man.
Tnk

****

KC
CR
Pch
Rel Ya-ssh! Be quiet, boy. You may hit the microphone.
Stn
Reg
Lar
Stv He gon' getchyou with 'isli's,
Jes
Tom
Jhn Right?
Tnk Now you big mother - f -

```
KC
CR
Pch
Rel
Stn         Okay, keep de noise down!
Reg
Lar
Stv      man.             He got li-  he got leg like di -
Jes
Tom
Jhn                       Oh, y-  s  c  u  m       b  a  l  l  !
Tnk  skaggy mother fucker!
*************************************************************
KC
CR
Pch                            Oh, Steeevie !
Rel         aoh, your mother got legs on 'er nose.
Stn                                                  Eh,
Reg
Lar
Stv  like -
Jes
Tom
Jhn
Tnk
*************************************************************
KC
CR
Pch
Rel
Stn   Magilla!
Reg
Lar                        Oh, baby!  Oh, baby, baby.
Stv                        You wan' hit me?       We c'n -
Jes
Tom
Jhn                                                   They're
Tnk  your hair look like -
*************************************************************
KC
CR
Pch
Rel
Stn                                         Huh-ha (laughs)
Reg
Lar                                                     Oh
Stv  We c'n take it in the room down there          We can
Jes
Tom                       Order in the -
Jhn     talkin' aboutchyou
Tnk
```

KC
CR
Pch
Rel Hi' mother a chimpanzee
Stn
Reg
Lar Baaby
Stv take it in the room, K - *
Jes
Tom Ha? ha? ha?
Jhn What's your name again,
Tnk

****

KC Yo! man! We gonna talk about fights,man! Y'all see
CR
Pch
Rel
Stn
Reg
Lar
Stv
Jes
Tom My name isss Tomm
Jhn I f'got all 'at m'self
Tnk

****

KC these pictures up here-man-y'know who that is?
CR
Pch
Rel Who's that punk
Stn
Reg
Lar
Stv
Jes
Tom
Jhn Thomas the -
Tnk

****

KC
CR
Pch
Rel right there?
Stn Shhoo! Rednall!
Reg mother-fuck:him!
Lar Man-
Stv
Jes
Tom
Jhn Tom-the punk!
Tnk

Personal sounding in the 200's block. The exchanges between Tinker, Tommy, Johnny and Stevie contain no referential content at all. They are all sounds: not against a relative of the opponent, but against ritualized personal attributes. Many of these sounds cannot be interpreted without knowing what these personal attributes are. When it is not obvious, one can reconstruct this information from other, sometimes widely separated, portions of the text, even without knowing anything about the boys independently.

It may seem odd to combine the two notions of 'personal' and 'ritualized', since these were opposed in 4.2.3. Personal sounding may thus appear to be a contradiction in terms. We are using 'personal' here to mean that the ritual attributes are those of the person sounded on himself, but not 'personally' in the sense of being taken as a personal insult. We will return to this problem after presenting the data in the form of fifteen exchanges. The transcript given here includes the first eight.

(1) In the section transcribed here, Johnny begins by sounding on Tinker's fatness with "Blubber! Fat man Tinkerrrr! Blubberrrrr!" Blubber is a pejorative nickname for Tinker (whose given name is Charles).

(2) Tinker does not answer; there is no strict compulsion to reply in personal sounding. Instead, Tommy sounds on Johnny by "Say. Blackmaaaan!" Johnny has the darkest skin of the three, and blackness is a ritual attribute of his.

(3) Stevie now joins in sounding on Johnny in a more complicated way. His "Di-di-di..." is an extremely musical version of the theme music from "Batman", one of the most popular television programs at that time; the parody which substitutes Blackman is apparently well-known. At the same time, Stevie looks at Johnny, grins, and rubs the top of his head with his right hand in a circular motion. Johnny acknowledges this by touching the top of his own head with the flat of his hand. Stevie's gesture is a simultaneous sound on another personal attribute of Johnny. He once had a curious bald spot on his head which has now grown over, but it is still a theme for ritual personal sounding. Johnny does not show any overt resentment of this attribute--instead, he seems to be proud of it: not all personal attributes are things to be ashamed of or denied.

(4) Johnny now turns to Tinker again, and delivers a long and complex sound on Tinker's alleged homosexual behavior. "'s all right, boah. Da's all right. Ya still muh man. Don't care h-how many dicks ya suck, ya still muh man". This technique of using a positive statement which assumes a negative one is used to sound on one of the ritual attributes of Tinker: it is not a personal charge that Tinker is a homosexual, but rather one that is used against anyone who

is fat (like David of the Thunderbirds), or indeed against any member of the group.

(5) Tinker does not answer, so Johnny prods him: "Right?" Tinker and Johnny then exchange epithets.

(6) Johnny then begins to sound on a third attribute of Tinker, his hair. "Your hair look like--". This attribute depends upon another of the themes of adolescent sounding, which like 'blackness' or 'thick lips', reflects the low prestige of Negro physical traits. The charge (to be made explicit later) is that Tinker's hair is so wiry that when you touch it, you cut your hand.

(7) At this point, Johnny hears Larry sounding on Rel by saying "Oh baby, oh baby", which is a ritual way of saying that someone is a homosexual--treating him like a good-looking girl. Johnny picks this theme up, and uses it to sound on Tinker again, "They're talkin' aboutchyou." This is the only point in the section studied where the 200's group pays any attention to what is going on in the 100's group, or to John Lewis. Stanley then gets their attention by leaning forward and shouting for a cigarette, which temporarily interrupts the exchanges.

(8) Johnny then turns away from Tinker and initiates an exchange with Tommy. He does this by the ritual insult of claiming to forget someone's name (as in the Microbus sounding session of 4.2.3, where Junior addresses John Lewis as "Hey what's your name!") Tom answers suspiciously by drawling out "My name isss Tomm." [The transcript ends here: from this point we give the text for the 200's members in full].

(9) Johnny then intones, "They call me Johnnie!!" and to the same tune, Tommy answers "Black maan!"

(10) Johnny then picks up the same phrase he used to initiate sounding against Tinker, "'s' all right Tommy", and begins a long slow chant, which lasts for several minutes, without regard to anything else going on around him.

They call 'm Tommy!
The faggie!
He gives away!
Bootie!
Uh-nuhm Tommie!
The faggit!
He gives əwaaay
bootie!
They call 'im Tommie
the faggot
and he gives away
bootie
They call (laughs) him Tommy (laughs)

Bootie is a term which in some NNE groups means cunt, but here it means ass, with homosexual reference.

(11) Tommy finally answers with a sound on Johnny's blackness: "Black spook!"

(12) Johnny then continues the chant, inserting a reference to another ritual attribute of Tommy:

D'call 'im Tommee
the long nose
an' 'e goes aroun' (chuckle)

(13) Tommy objects to this, calling out, "Eh you see 'im, 'e callin' me a long-nose!" Exactly what is the basis for this public objection is not clear.

(14) Tinker then engages in some horse play, and rubs Johnny's head.

Johnny: (laughs) Don't mess with the hair, man! You
messin' with the bald spot. (laughs)
Tinker: You. You hair so funny.(laughs)

(15) Johnny is plainly not ashamed of his ritual bald spot, but in response to Tinker's remark, he touches Tinker's head and shouts:

Johnny: OUCH OH! OH! I'M BLOODIN'!...I'M BLOODIN'!
I TOUCHED YOUR HAIR AN' I GOT CUT, I'M BLOODIN'!

In general, one hears this personal sounding as very good natured. The sounds are quite conventional. They do not reach out to the absurd and bizarre limits of ritual sounding shown in 4.2.3, nor do they develop the syntactic complexity of ritual sounds. The personal sounds are more conventional than ritual sounds on relatives, because, for one thing, they are tied to a small number of fixed attributes. One cannot invent a new ritual attribute on the spot; these are assigned by the group informally and fixed over a period of time. The personal attributes used in these exchanges are:

Tinker	Johnny	Tommy
Fat: "Blubber"	Dark skin:	"Long-nose"
Wiry hair	"Blackman"	Homosexual
Homosexual	Bald spot	

Johnny is the best sounder in these fifteen exchanges: he initiates them, and he has the last word. It is not accidental that he is sitting in the middle. But his superiority seems due to a greater store of items in his memory, and his readiness to use them, rather than skill in fitting a response to someone else's sound.

The personal sounds raise a difficult problem in that they are ritual utterances, and at the same time personal insults. Whereas the propositions of ritual sounds of 4.2.3 are all intended to be obviously untrue, each of the personal attributes has a basis on reality (except perhaps the homosexuality theme, and even here it must be noted that one form of homosexual activity or another is very common in the peer groups.) Nor can we deny that these insults are felt personally--they may very well have considerable emotional weight. In what sense, then, are they ritualized insults?

It is plain that these sounds are socially defined by the group as matters of ritual. Whether or not someone is hurt by a personal sound, he is under no obligation to appear hurt. Whereas louding degrades the target personally before a group, ritual sounding does not necessarily lower his status. Again the appropriate response is not to deny the attribute, but to respond with a sound against an attribute of the opponent. It is a matter of social definition rather than psychological reality that the target has not been insulted: in these rituals the degree of seriousness is defined at a low level, and consequently no defense is required.

Generalized sounding. The main activity in Jets II is that of the leaders of the Jets, who occupy the main table in Figure 2-9. Stanley, the president, and Rednall (Reggie, Reginald) the number two man, sit on the left, and opposite them two other core members, Rel and Larry. Larry's older brother Jesse is on the right of Rednall; Jesse (or Junior) says nothing throughout this session, though he is active picking up the cards from the 200's block. He is almost always silent in group sessions, but he talks a great deal in face-to-face interviews, and members regularly go to him for advice on a number of topics. Larry's younger brother Peaches is against the wall. Though he is younger than the others, he is a popular and central member; he does not talk much in group sessions unless he is given the floor; in this section he gets attention by burning his neighbor Rel with a cigarette.

The behavior which we here call "generalized sounding" is very tightly tied to the context of verbal interaction. It is not possible to take examples out of context and understand their meaning. We will therefore examine in detail a small number of encounters in the transcript in succession, attempting to account for everything that is said.

As the transcript begins, John Lewis [KC] is steadily intoning in the background his slightly exasperated request for the brothers to put the cards away. Rel has turned around in his chair, and is wrestling with Peaches to make him stop fooling around with his cigarette. Peaches responds with "O.K, O.K.," but continues to fool around, and Rel responds with another threat. The sequence we will study begins when (1) Larry engages in "granning" or "grandstanding" by cupping his hand to his mouth and shouting "CARD GAME OVER!!!"

(2) At this point, Rednall disrupts by saying "Let's get some more money, get five dollars and get a bag (of reefers)."

(3) Rel rebukes him by saying "You ain't gettin' no bag, man." (Using the special intonation or "Jet sound")

You
gettin' no *ba-ag* ma^{an}.

(4) Stanley in turn calls out, "Le''s get some a Rel *aaass*!" The word *ass* often means a whole person, metonymically, but the following development shows that it has its literal meaning here.

(5) At this point, Larry enters the scene, and although we do not observe his action directly(the camera is not focussed on Larry and Rel until (6)), it appears that he responds to Stanley's remark by grabbing at Rel's ass. Rel instantly hits him back, and says "Get offa me, man."

(6) Larry holds up his hands to defend himself, and says, with a tone of loud innocence, "Eh man, why you hit me? . . . Why you hit me?"

(7) Rel looks directly at him, and in a low, serious tone says "Don' never t- Don' never touch me."

(8) Larry loudly repeats his protestation of innocence, "Why you hit me?"

(9) Rel glances up covertly at John Lewis, and puts his finger to his mouth: "Ya-ssh! Be quiet, boy. You may hit the microphone." and points to the microphone.

(10) At this point, Stevie tries to intervene. He leans over to Larry and says, "He gon' getchyou with 'is li's, man":that is, warning Larry that Rel is effective with his legs. Stevie goes on, but cannot quite get out his simile "He got legs like---" Larry turns his head just enough to give Stevie a withering glance.

(11) Rel interrupts Stevie: "Aoh, your *mother* got legs on 'er *nose*!" This applied sound effectively crushes Stevie, who turns his back toward the 200's block, then gets involved in an altercation with John Lewis.

In the meantime, Stanley has been grandstanding himself with "Okay, keep the noise down!" (12) But at this point he calls out "Eh Magilla!" This is a personal sound on Larry, based on the cartoon character "Magilla Gorilla.

(13) Larry does not respond to this, but continues to attack Rel by a personal sound on the homosexuality theme: "Oh baby! Oh, baby, baby." He uses a special vowel in *baby* with a centralized nucleus, [bəibi], somehow intended to contribute to the meaning, "Oh what a beautiful babe you are."

(14) Rel answers Larry, but with another ritual sound, picking up on the theme initiated by Stanley: "Hi' mother a chimpan*zee*!" One cannot judge the response, because at this point John Lewis demands the attention of the group for a question about some pictures of fighters pinned on the wall. Another routine begins at this point, as Rel says "Who's that punk right there?" and Rednall again disrupts with "Mother-fuck him!" We will stop here to consider what indeed has happened in (1-14).

First one can note that a two-person game is being played, of the form A B A B, but in which the identities of A and B shift rapidly. It is essentially a two-person game with an audience, but members of the audience can leave their seats and join the game at any moment. The game is played by exchanging certain themes--not so much the personal themes the 200's block are using, but more abstract elements. The basic material used in the game is the opposition of two value systems, "good" and "bad", as discussed in 4.1. The "bad" values are based on stealing, fighting, cursing, drink, drugs and sex; the "good" values are simply rebukes or reprimands which put down these "bad" actions. Members engaged in these encounters alternately take the roles of "bad" or disruptive, and "good" or socializing, in order to score abstract points against their opponents. In one sense, these are all forms of "grandstanding" or "granning", in which a speaker puts himself forward in full view of the audience. Having gained prominence by sounding on someone, he then becomes a proper object for anyone else to sound on. We can then tabulate the opening sequence under these headings:

	A "good"	B "bad"	
(1)	Larry		CARD GAME OVER!!!
(2)		Rednall	Le's...get a bag.
(3)	Rel		You gettin' no *bag*, man.
(4)		Stanley	Le's get some o! Rel·aaasss!

Rednall's remark (2) is not directed against Stanley specifically--it is a general disruption of the situation. Rel rebukes Rednall, and so exposes himself to attack; Stanley then attacks Rel. The anaphoric character of (3) and (4) is shown by the play on the word get, which is the constant element in (2), (3) and (4). In one sense,(2-4)is a play on the word get.

The non-verbal exchange of Larry and Rel follows. Throughout the following exchange, Rel maintains the role of "good", even though Larry loudly protests his innocence, and behaves as if Rel had attacked him. Larry's tactic is intended as always to be transparent: he is not relinquishing his claim to be "bad" by protesting that he is "good".

	A "good"	B "bad"	
(5)	Rel		Get offa me.
(6)		Larry	"Why you hit me?"
(7)	Rel		Don' never touch me.
(8)		Larry	"Why you hit me?"
(9)	Rel		Be quiet boy. You may hit the microphone.

Rel's "breaking frame," and his low quiet tone shows that he does not consider grab-ass a proper subject for the game; his covert glance at John Lewis fits in with the general norms of the Jets and Cobras who maintain a fairly strong taboo on public homosexual play. These are both socializing gestures, like the concern for the microphone. Larry's repeated claim of innocence is a "good" gesture only on the surface--on a deeper level it is "bad", and puts down Rel's "good" remark by claiming there is no reason for a rebuke.

This ends the play on "good" and "bad" values. Stevie then tries to enter the situation with a sound, and Rel's applied sound against him leads to a series of personal and applied sounds in which no one is "good". Since ritual "sounding" is a form of "cursing", no one who sounds in this sense can be "good"; on the other hand, to put down someone who has sounded is an appropriate response to someone's being "bad".

	A	B	
(10)	Stevie		He got legs like--
(11)		Rel	Your mother got legs on her nose.

	A		B	
(12)	Stanley	→	(Larry)	Eh Magilla!
(13)	Larry	→	(Rel)	Oh baby. Oh baby, baby.
(14)		←	Rel	Hi' mother a chimpanzee.

Here there is no simple two-person sounding situation. Different members take the role of A and B; their sounds are normally directed toward those who have just been A or B. It would be impossible, for example, for Stanley to suddenly sound on Jesse or Peaches in this sequence. After (11), the only available objects for Stanley's attack are Stevie, Rel and Larry. The first is not worthy of his attention. Rel would be a possible choice, but Stanley signals out Larry who has just been most prominent in the sense of being the baddest. Larry does not reply to this personal sound of Stanley, but meditatively pursues the encounter with Rel, which was interrupted by Stevie at (10)--Rel's last remark to Larry was still unanswered. Rel responds to Larry, again not to Stanley, and on the face of it, it seems that Stanley's intervention had no effect. But the fact that Rel picks up Stanley's personal sound on Larry--the gorilla theme--and adopts it as an applied sound, Hi' mother a chimpanzee shows that Stanley's contribution has indeed been absorbed. In all these exchanges, it seems that Rel is most apt at ritual sounds in the context of this general sounding--the mechanism which we have called "applied sounding" in 4.2.3. The applied sounds used by Rel resemble the final, third elements which we noted in ritual sounding; they have the short final character that seems most effective in closing off a sequence.

To begin a series of this sort, it is necessary for someone to take a prominent and provocative position on some point.[4] The disruptive behavior of Reginald is perfectly suited for this. Other members can then build upon his contribution, taking the opposite value, embroidering or elaborating on his remark--but all this is possible because Rednall has become the center of attention. The second contributor now in turn becomes a proper object for others to sound on, to use as a basis for their verbal skill. The locus of this interaction inevitably shifts as different people enter the situation, and those who were once in the center of things become detached if the center moves far enough away. Thus Stanley attacks Rel, Larry becomes involved, Stevie intervenes, and the focus of interaction shifts quite far from Stanley. Stanley then detaches his interest, and shouts a general direction to keep the noise down towards the other end of the table. Peaches is nearer to Stevie (and closer in age) than Stanley, and at the moment that Stevie has the floor, Peaches reacts to his incompetence at the same time that Rel does: "Oh Steeevie!" (This is a good example of a contribution that would normally be completely lost and is not picked up any microphone except Peaches' own.) The transcript shows that Stanley's instructions to the 200's block does succeed in quieting them, and it is just after that that Johnny picks up Larry's Oh baby, baby and uses it against Tinker. The chain of interaction then touches even this semi-detached group. We have only begun to explore the intricate set of relations in this passage, but enough has been said to show that generalized sounding provides a rich field for the exercise of verbal skills. It may be useful to go one step beyond the transcript, and look for a moment at the second routine which begins when Rednall disrupts again.

After John Lewis gets the attention of the group, he starts talking about some pictures of prize fights on the wall. (1) Rel complies with a socialized response, "Who's that punk right there?" (2) But Rednall disrupts with "Mother-fuck him!" (3) Stanley immediately frowns and turns in mock rebuke towards Rednall, "Shooo! Rednall! At the same time Larry protests "Man--" (On the group microphone, these are superimposed, so that it sounds exactly as if Stanley is saying "Man! Rednall!")

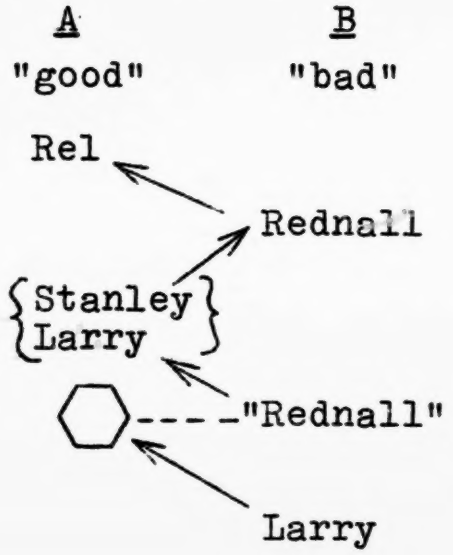
Rel continues to discuss fighters with John Lewis, but after a moment, (4) Larry takes up the theme of rebuking Rednall, "Red- naall!" Rednall is busy laying out a game of solitaire (ignoring John Lewis's plea to put away the cards). He says, "Hey-hey Stevie Larry, you gotta step down that dick shit!" Here Rednall takes the same line that Larry did earlier--pretending transparently that the "bad" act was that of someone else, and insolently rebukes them for it. He is thus being "bad", under cover of being "good". Larry has two options open: he chooses to sound against Rednall's surface line of being "good": he says, "Man, fuck one a'you sweet-lip bitches!" Rel laughs with pleasure, "Whht--hanh hah!" and gives Larry five (a meeting of open hands), and Larry says, "You like that, hah. Ah know you do!"

This routine is thus finished by the overwhelming superiority of Larry's ingenious response, which combines being "bad" (cursing) with an ingenious rebuke to Rednall's posture. It brings a personal sound of homosexuality against Rednall, a kind of poetic justice for his tactic of posing as "good", and allows Larry to take a "bad" role in an ingenious and original way. "Sweet-lipped bitches" is a left-hand embedding of a complex participle which is rarely achieved in colloquial speech (see adult narratives of 4.9.5) and it is hard to deny that the compactness of the construction adds a great deal to Larry's success.

In the meantime, Stanley picks up another of Rednall's disruptions--continuing to play cards--and starts punching him, crying "A'm unna getchu! The guys said no card playin'!" This begins another routine in which "good" is played off against "bad".

One alternative to the view presented here is that each of the utterances is much closer to its literal value--that the Jets mean what they say. One is then left with a number of insoluble problems. If Stanley is the leader, and he keeps telling the brothers to quiet down (this goes on all evening), why don't they? And if he cannot control them, how can he go on being the leader? Why does Larry shout "that's all for the cards"--he has less interest than anyone in talking about the Cobras, and as a matter of fact he leaves quite early. And if Stanley and Larry get angry with Rednall for cursing and playing cards and disrupting the session, why did they both attack Rel when he rebuked Rednall? These are only a few of the problems which arise if we take these utterances literally. There is somewhat more connection with the exterior context in case of generalized sounding than with ritual sounding--somewhat more referential content but not very much more.

A sketch of the second routine initiated by Rednall would then appear as:



(1) Who's that punk right there?

(2) Motherfuck him!

(3) Shhoo! Rednall!
Man-- Red n-a-all!

(4) Hey hey Stevie, Larry you gotta step down that dick shit.

(5) Man, fuck one' you sweet lip bitches!

The approbation which Larry won by his sound against Rednall was satisfying to him, and revealing to us. It confirms the notion suggested above that generalized sounding, like ritual sounding, is an exercise in verbal skills which brings its greatest rewards to those who are most adept at handling the English language within the NNE value system.

4.2.5. Rifting and heavy knowledge. The last speech event that we will consider here is the formal display of occult or 'heavy' knowledge known as rifting or riffing. The content of this speech event as we will examine it is the religious ideology of the black Muslims and sects derived from them, as it is absorbed by adolescents in the 116th Street area: those Cobras who became the Bohemian Brothers and some of the older Thunderbirds. In this report, we will not attempt to specify the history and differences of the Black Muslims, the Nation of Islam (the Lost-Found Children of Islam), the Five per centers, and other groups, but refer generally to the black Muslim ideology as that range of doctrine which posits the black man as "original man", urges Afro-Americans to achieve self-knowledge and become Allah, and traces evil in the world to the creation of the white man.

The term rifting is a recent adaptation of an older term riffing, which shows a hypercorrect addition of a -t. Since -ft clusters are simplified with a high degree of frequency, it is possible for speakers to hear [rɪf] and to assign the underlying form rift as the word is not spelled. The term refers to a style of speech--an elevated, high flown delivery which incorporates a great many learned Latinate words, spelling out the uncontracted form of function words with a characteristic level and sustained intonation pattern that lays extra stress and length on the last stressed items. The occult knowledge which is delivered in this way is described as 'heavy'--it is heavy knowledge, heavy stuff, or heavy shit, and too heavy for outsiders to understand. Heavy or secret knowledge is learned by rote; adepts are examined in a speech event known as 'putting someone on the square', or 'being on the square': they are asked a series of difficult questions before an audience, and must deliver the right answers to maintain their claim to know. There is a great deal of status to be gained from possessing this 'knowledge, wisdom and understanding': in fact, it is the primary source of prestige for the leaders of the Bohemian Brothers. That is not to say that heavy knowledge is highly prized everywhere: the Jets and others in the 112th Street area are indifferent to it. But although the fortunes of eschatological Muslim religion may rise and fall in particular areas, it does seem that Muslim ideology is becoming more widely known in recent years.

There is a great deal of linguistic interest in rifting, for it is the most formal branch of the vernacular. It will be instructive to see which NNE grammatical features are constant in the rifting style, and which shift towards the formal end. There will clearly be an SE influence, since much of the Muslim ideology is written down, studied in classes; it uses the vocabulary of the Bible, sermons, and other religious texts. Muslim ideology is taught directly by adults who are more heavily influenced by SE than the adolescents themselves. Some of the grammatical features found in these SE sources will appear unchanged and others will be converted into the vernacular equivalents. Moreover, it will be instructive to see what syntactic devices are utilized in rifting : the function of this style is to impress others with the depth of one's knowledge, and it is quite plausible that complex syntax would play a role in this effort.

There is also considerable interest in rifting as far as the educational crisis of the ghetto areas is concerned. The Muslim religion has developed a profound and intense interest in learning among the NNE adolescents. The passionate concern for study and learning which is generated by this religion is what the schools would like to develop, but have failed to do so. Nothing is more striking than the respect for the Muslim written word and for Muslim learning expressed by the NNE adolescents, as compared to their reaction and contempt for the learning offered in school ("I'm hip to whitey's bullshit.") This learning involves reading and writing, the study of science and history; and logical disputation as well as rote memorization.

It will be evident that rifting draws heavily on the traditional preaching style of the Southern Baptists, evangelical religions, and the storefront churches of Harlem. The eschatological 'end of the world' theme is intimately mixed with racial history, which attempts to reverse the pattern of self-apology and self-hatred which has been prominent in the Negro community.

In this section, we will present examples of rifting from three individuals: Boot in the last group session with the Thunderbirds, Quahab in the second group session with the Cobras, and Akbar in an individual interview. Since the content as well as the style will be quite strange to most readers, it will be necessary to present a fair amount of the text to convey a notion of the style itself. ~~It will be necessary to remember that~~ In true rifting the major lexical items are given extra-heavy stress, timed at equal intervals; the last item is often drawn out to two or three times normal length. In the typical chant, pitch rises to a fairly high level (third) and is maintained to the last stress, when it falls slowly.

Boot on the square. In our last session with the Thunderbirds, Memory Tests were given to some individuals while the rest joined in a group session. During one of these sessions, Clarence Robins put Boot *on the square*. It will be remembered that Boot was the verbal leader of the Thunderbirds during the period of their formal organication, and seems to have maintained his informal status in this respect without much change. This took place a year after his first interview, when Boot was almost fourteen. Though he was originally a very bad reader, he had improved considerably, and now was reading somewhere around the third grade level. A great deal of pressure had been put on Boot to improve his school work; staff members of the Recreation Center had attempted to create social organizations in which Boot would be excluded unless he could read. The following nine passages are the complete text of this event.

CR: I want to ask you, what is tricknology?

Boot: Tricknology is when som--when somebody try to trick
you, like--like--if I was Allah, and you was--
a man that eat pig, right? Well, well you get--
(1) the pig got your mind all tricked up, where--
I'm tryin' to teach you more knowledge and wisdom and understandin' of yourself so you wouldn't
eat it.

Tricknology is sometimes spelled trickknowledgy. The phrase knowlege, [and] wisdom and understanding is one of the most common formulas in rifting. Note that despite the formality of Boot's answer, the third singular -s does not appear in try and eat. Furthermore, we get the normal NNE you was, rather than you were.

(2)
CR: How much knowledge do you have.

Boot: I don't know... I have enough.

CR: Uh huh. Do you have a--do you know who you are?

Boot: Yeah.

CR: Have you a attribute?

Boot: Yeah I have astribute. **[sic].**

CR: What's your attribute?

Boot: King Ba.

CR: Which means?

Boot: The greates'.

The I don't know that Boot uses here is a positive statement, not to be confused with the expression I 'on' know [^{1}a ^{3}o ^{2}no] which is used to avoid an answer: Boot has not committed himself to Muslim ideology without reserve, as will appear below. The word attribute gives a great deal of phonological difficulty: [æstrɪbjut] is quite common. Since the final -t is often glottalized and lost entirely, we can also get such forms as [æstrɪbjul] **supplied in re-analysis.**

(3)

CR: But who gave you that attribute?

Boot: Mah father.

CR: And who's your father?

Boot: Alláh.

CR: And who is--who is. . Alláh?

Boot: Alláh is mah fáther.

The Muslim religion preserves a number of mystical identifications which are registered here. A person who has self-knowledge *is* Allah, and Allah is also his father. Boot's answer is circular, but not absurd. One of the other T-Birds objects:

(4)

Alvin: Alláh is *God*, man.

Boot: I know he's God but he's--

Alvin: If I'm gonna exist as Alláh I gotta be a'zac' at all times.

Boot: What you mean 'zac'--I *am* 'zac' at *all times*.

The phrase *I am (a)zac'* is from *I am exact*; Boot repeats it as simply *I am 'zac'* and we hear the same phrase from one of the Brothers below. The uncontracted *I am* is a characteristic formal NNE device.

(5)

CR: This is square business?

Boot: Square business.

CR: Are you on the *square*?

Boot: Anh--say that again?

CR: Are you *on* the square?

Boot: Yeh *I'm* on the square.

Square is used in two different ways here. First of all, the expression *square business* is quite common in NNE, among both Jets and Cobras. The word *business* is usually pronounced [bɪd̪nɪs] as the sibilant *s* before *n* becomes assimilated to a°stop. This is common throughout the South in such words as *wasn't*, but *business* is the most common example in this area. As far as content is concerned, there is a certain insecurity in Boot's approach, but he is impelled to claim as much knowledge as possible. He clearly feels that he is being tested and he is doing his utmost to pass the test.

(6)

CR: Who-- if-if- If the Asiatic black man. . has knowledge of himself, who does not have knowledge of himself?

Boot: The man that ate the *swine*.

CR: And who is the man that ate the swine?

Boot: Anybody that *eats* it [đæz its ɪt]

CR: Ahhah. And what is the swine?

Boot: The swine is pig.

CR: Pork. And why is a --why is a pig called a swine?

Boot: 'Cause, it has nine hundred and ninety nine germs including the rat, cat and dog.

In this section Boot is quite sure of his answers. Except for his very first answer, his replies have been quite short, and there is none of the extended display which we would call rifting. But here the catechism picks up speed, and in this last answer, Boot reels off the formula with great speed and precision. The *Asiatic black man* refers to original man, who is colored; the white man is not original, but was created later by evil intent. As far as grammar is concerned, note that Boot does use a third singular -*s*, but not without effort. When he says *that eats it*, the -*s* also infects the pronunciation of *that*, yielding [đæzitsɪt].

(7)

CR: And what exactly . . is wrong with eating--the rat, cat and dog?

Boot: Wha--say that again?

CR: Why--why is it that we don't eat rat, cat and dog?

Boot: Well, because it have germs! Other people eat it, but--I 'on' know aboutchyou..

CR: Mmhm.

Boot: *I* eat it, but it tas' good. But I jus' know.

CR: But you *know*.

Boot: I know.

CR: When you *stop* eating the swine, then what will happen to you?

Boot: You get more knowledge of yourself. You have more knowledge.

CR: Does Mohammed Ali have knowledge of himself?

Boot: Of course.

In this extract, the limits of Boot's knowledge of commitment to the tenets of the Muslim religion show up. Yet he is not willing to admit that he lacks the valuable knowledge which religion has to offer.

(8)

CR: How many planets are there?
Boot: Excuse me?
CR: How many planets are there?
Boot: Planets--um, twelve. -uh- whe--
CR: And what are there?
Boot: It's [ɪz] Jupiter,[jupɪtə́] Pluto [bluto], Mercury [mərkəri] Mars [mɑrz], Saturn [sætən]...
Money: Venus...
Boot: Venus. . um -
Money: Mars. .
Boot: [annoyed] I said that a'ready... Mercury...
CR: Umhm.
PC: What about the moon?
Boot: Yeah I say the moon. . .
PC: That a planet?
X: Nooǫ!!
Boot: Well ah think it is.

This knowledge of the solar system was not acquired in school, but in the Muslim catechism. It must be admitted that Boot's knowledge of the solar system is only partial, but his desire to know is evident. The other Thunderbirds are following closely: Money tries to add his knowledge. PC is Paul Cohen. In this list we note the pronunciation of [r] in Mars, though not in Jupiter or Saturn. The dummy there of SE does not appear, but rather the it of NNE.

(9)

PC: Who made the white man?
Boot: Ah forgot. I know--I know but I forgot.
Alvin: Some kind of monkey or sump'm like that.
CR: Who made the white man?
Boot: The white monkey.
CR: And what was--what was the name of the scientist that created the white man?
Boot: Uhm. . . uh wait a minute! I know, cause I got in a book.. I DO!

CR: You got it in a book?
Boot: I got it in a book at home.
CR: What book?
Alvin: It was a history... it was a history book.
Boot: A history book, correct!

The name of the scientist who created the white man is Yakub, [jɑku] born twenty miles outside of Mecca; Boot is seriously deficient in not knowing this fundamental point of Muslim mythology. But most significant are (1) his passionate interest in the right answer, and (2) his regard for the history book at home.

In this excerpt there is very little rifting proper--only two good instances of the style itself. Boot's knowledge is only partial, but he is reaching out for it, and beginning to master the formal delivery more than the other Thunderbirds. The notions of truth and knowledge, and of self-knowledge, are already very much a part of his thinking. It is difficult to say at what level of seriousness Boot holds these opinions--whether or not we are dealing with any deeper conviction than in the activity of sounding. Just as one plays at being "bad" in sounding, so Boot is playing at being a Muslim. In the excerpts to follow we will see a much higher development of the Muslim mythology, of skill at rifting, and perhaps a higher level of personal involvement.

The over-all view of the grammatical variables which we get from this and other passages is that of formal NNE. Despite the fact that CR uses SE forms, Boot does not really shift out of the vernacular. There is of course no difficulty in using the full forms of the copula (3.4) including I am (3.4.2) But the basic patterns of agreement in NNE prevail: he have, you was, he don't (3.5.1); and the patterns of consonant cluster simplification noted in 3.2 prevail. For the more complex levels of syntax, we will need richer examples of rifting.

Quahab and the Brothers. Our last formal contact with the "Cobras" was a group session in May of 1966. The organization known as the Cobras had been dissolved at the beginning of the year, and a new club named the Bohemian Brothers formed, including ex-members of the Cobras and other clubs who were committed to the Muslim religion (see 4.1 for the history of these re-organizations and mergers.) The new president was Quahab (slave name, Rufus) who was the most knowledgeable in Muslim ideology and affairs. Then Bohemian Brothers also dissolved as a formal unit, and the group claimed simply to be members of the Nation (of Islam). At this time they were in their most intense period of commitment to Muslim religion.. The Brothers called each other belove' or by their attributes, and never used their slave (Christian) names. This group session was unusual in that the members remained very much aware of the fact that they were being recorded: the white members of the staff stayed well in the background at this session, but the Brothers felt that they were trying to obtain from them their secret knowledge. Nevertheless, there was a great deal of rifting and display of secret knowledge, for reasons to be discussed. We also have examples of rifting from a recording made on the Microbus on the way back, where awareness of recording was not a factor. The leading voice in all of this was Quahab, who was loudest, clearest and most prominent in all rifting. Many members would join in towards the end of his phrases, much as members of a congregation will do with a preacher. This section is essentially a study in Quahab's style of rifting: the contributions of other Brothers will simply be noted by a dash. We will extract examples of rifting on three topics: food, eschatology (the end of the world), and heavy knowledge (and those trying to seek it).

Food. The Brothers had adopted a rigid set of dietary laws; they claimed to be vegetarians, did not drink wine or other alcoholic drinks. John Lewis told us, as noted in 4.1, that one of the few acceptable foods that we could serve would be lettuce and tomato sandwiches on whole-wheat bread; he prepared a large stack of these with his own hands, but trouble arose over the mayonnaise. Some brothers contended that mayonnaise contained eggs, that eggs were from chickens, that chickens were meat, that they didn't eat meat, and therefore could not eat the sandwiches.

(10) --Man, he eat up meats, and what is meat but a solid.

Q: --No, bro', we din't eat no meat, you might as well say we drunk it, because it was in a liquid fo-orm.

The issue of liquids vs. solids is that those with the most knowledge of theirselves will consume only liquids, such as fruit nectar. Rifting style appears in the favorite construction: what is X but a Y, and in Q's long chant which ends with a long-drawn out form. Quahab continues speaking of the egg.

(11) Q: --Dig it, it ain't even in existence yet, dig that. It ain't even in existence yet.

--It didn't come to be a chicken yet.

--You can detect it with a physical eye, you can detect that.

Existence, like physical and physical structure, is one of the favorite learned words in this style of rifting. The repetition of whole sentences is common throughout these passages. Note the way the simple meaning of you can see that is expanded to you can detect it with a physical eye: this is typical of good rifting style.

Quahab goes deeper into the matter of solids vs. liquids:

(12) Q: --But dig it, brothers,. . . only of a liquids,
 why the smallest atom known to man is a
 atom of water.

--Well, animal is a solid, isn't it? I say liquid
 flow, and mayonnaise don't flow.

This long line of Quahab shows the elongation of the rifting sentence with evenly distributed heavy stresses. Why may be considered a mere expletive here without syntactic connection to the rest of the sentence: it is a common form in this style. The grammar used in (10-12) is formal NNE, not SE. The full forms of the copula (and the tag question), are typical of NNE (3.4.2); but third singular -s does not appear.

At one point, John Lewis raised a question about wine:

(13) KC: O.K., like dig now, wha's wine?

--What is wine? Wine is only a chemical, meanin'
 that gone through a whole lot o' chemical
 changes.

--Right, but y'all drink wine, right?

--Nooooooo!
--Nooooooo! We quit that.
--Naa.
--No pork, 'n ain't gonna be no more wine, 'n' no
 more smoke, 'a's only of the pas'.

One of the sources of syntactic complexity in rifting is to use a learned term, like chemical, and then to expound it, with an introductory meanin'. Note the case of it-deletion in ain't gonna be no more wine. (3.6.5); it is not accidental that this is associated with indefinites, for it-deletion and negative inversion are closely associated.

Quahab has this to say about wine:

Wine is of the earth, wine is of earf, bro'.

Heavy stress on alternating syllables leads to re-stressing *of*, characteristic of the formal rifting style.

On the way back in the Microbus, the Brothers were laying plans for a fast.

(14) Q: --We gon' go on a five-day fast tomorrow.
--Three days.
Q: --We gon' gon a three-day or five-days.
--Three days.
{--Make it five! Make it five!
{--I'm gon' on a fas'
Q: --Dig it, everybody go on a five! Everybody go on a five!

Quahab decides for the group; naturally one wonders if the Brothers actually do fast. There is considerable scepticism in some quarters about how much of the Brothers' religion is for public consumption and how much is internal. Members claim to enjoy the fasts ("It feels so good on that second day!"); in any case, it seems that fasts are taken as serious business:

(15) --I wantcha know that I can comp*ete*.

--Jus' drinkin' them nectar 'n' juices.
--They say drink a lot o' tea 'n' suck a peppermint, once in a while.

The end of the world. The Brothers believed that the world was coming to an end on July 4, 1966 (less than sixty days from the time of this session) This belief was not theirs alone: we were informed that the Five Per Centers generally were committed to this view. John Lewis put the following question to the Brothers:

(16) KC: --Like a yo, man, I wanna ask y'all a question, man. What is doomsday?
--Hah!
KC: --What is doomsday?
--These are the last days.
--These are the last days.
Q: --These are the *la-ast da-ays*.
All: --The wrath is *here now*
--The wrath is *here now*.
Q: --I am'zac'at *all* times.

Into this mystic chant, Quahab inserts the same line which we heard from the Thunderbirds, spelling out the normally contracted *I'm* as *I am*. Quahab then elaborates on the doomday theme.

(17) Q: --The wrath is here now, you can see by the clouds,
Why the clouds will come down lower 'n' lower.

--On the fourth.

Q: --Dig it.

--July!
--I'm gon' see how they react.

Quahab's *dig it* was intended to warn the Brothers not to divulge their secret knowledge about July fourth, but the other brother~~s~~ justified his rifting by saying that he was seeing how "they" (that is, staff members other than John Lewis) would react. But Quahab himself cannot resist talking about July fourth, and displaying his knowledge.

(18) Q: --July. .
--I'm see how they reac'.

Q: --July, July. Dig that.....
Dig it! In August an' if you pull th'ough it,
Allah you Go-o-d.
Allah you Go-o-d.
Allah you Go-o-d. [Others join in].

--I'm a see how they reac'.

--On July fourth.

Q: --Dig it, i's all on here, yeah.
But they still can't dig it...

'Le's be cool, brothers, le's be cool 'n' quiet.

Quahab could not resist going into the ecstatic ritual *Allah you God*, which we must take as addressed to the Brother who is Allah now, but will be Allah even more then: *Allah, you are God*. The end of the world is closely associated with the solution of the problems of the Negro people. As Quahab says in a long and classic example of rifting:

(19) Q: --Dig that--the *laas*t days of *that* *ye-ear* when *all people*--we'll have succeeded in becomin' a dominant people under Christ Revelation, when all people will come to know our knowledge, wisdom 'n' understandin', that we are the sons of men.

--We are the sons of men.

--This physical structure is the highest form of man.

But the end of the world is also associated with such simple matters as the end of school.

(20) --When the father come out here, it ain' gonna be no school.

--Brother, don' slip with no more understandin'.

The father refers to the leader of the sect who was then in the Matteawan State Hospital. The theme of the end of the world was the basis of a long exchange in the Microbus, which involved the prospect of a court case coming up shortly in which a number of Brothers were involved. The Cobras had long used the term tip meaning split, that is, 'to leave'.

(21) --After I finish with all this, I'm tippin' Jack. I'm tippin' from the ol' earth.

--Dig it, I am too.

--I'm tippin', man. I'm tired of stayin'.

Thus far, the notion of tipping seems to be a straight reflection of the yearning for the other world. But the material that followed shows there is more involved.

(22) --Well you know how it is.

--I w'gon' tip las' Sunday.

--But after this court business, I'm 'on' quit. I'm 'on' tip.

--When you go to court, Kahane, tomorrow--

--Nine, Tuesday.

--You gon' tip before you go back.

--You damn right!

--Hey Quahab!

--No, bro'. Don' tip befo' you go.

--They gon' send him to the clink.

--I figure it only eighteen months.

--They ain't tyin' no cans on my back, baby.

The mystic sense of leaving this old earth has gradually shifted into the meaning of taking off before the court case comes up. Note that the rifting style has given way completely to the informal NNE vernacular: speakers of these last lines could have been the Cobras of a year before.

(23) --The minute I hear court, I'm tippin'.

--I know I'm 'on' beat it, tha's why I'm gon' back. If I wasn' gon' beat it, I wouldn't tip back.

The switch from *tippin'* as a religious doctrine of departing the earth, to *tippin'* in a secular sense implies that the level of seriousness of the religious part may not be as well defined as first appears. We will cite other evidence of this below.

The protection of heavy knowledge. We have already observed Quahab's hints to the Brothers not to let outsiders have their secret knowledge, in (17), (18), and (20). On the face of it, there is no reason why any of the Brothers' heavy knowledge *should* have been divulged in this group session, as they were aware at all times that recording was going on. There were a number of justifications made:

(24) --Tha's to stir 'em up a li'l, brother.
Q: --Be cool, bro'. I's on the tape. [laughter]
--Tha's to stir 'em up a li'l, brother.
Q: --Dig it.

Why should the Brothers have continually ignored Quahab's instructions to cool it? The situation is reminiscent of Stanley's repeated instructions to the Jets, "Be cool, brothers!" Yet the Jets went on disrupting, and we were forced to conclude that Stanley's remarks were not at all serious, and designed to provoke more disruption. Now we find that Quahab himself, despite his warning to others, is doing most of the rifting about the last days. It is even more strange when we consider that there is a specific Muslim doctrine which states that the penalty for seeking this occult knowledge is death.

(25) Q: --Dig *this*, brothers, *those* who are tryin' to *seek* our *ways*, *tryin'* to *seek* our *knowledge*, will be destroyed in the *last days*, they know they can't escape the *wrath* that will fall up*on* *them*.

[Note that there is no difficulty in using the full forms of *will* in this formal rifting style, just as there is no difficulty in using full forms of *is*, *am* and *are*.] Again, we find Quahab announcing from the back of the Microbus:

(26) Q: --Any at*temp'* by any *graftin'* man to *gain* this *knowledge* will *surely* bring *death* to *such* a *one*.

And all the Brothers echo, with various elaborations, "The penalty is death!"

Given this strict injunction against revealing heavy knowledge, and the penalty of death against those who would seek it, we may legitimately ask, why does Quahab keep delivering all of this into the tape recorder? He himself feels the contradiction, and he defends himself at one point in an eloquent example of rifting:

(27) Q: --Dig it, that ain't no understandin',that ain't no understandin', that ain't nothin' compared to what we know. They could never get it all, dig, it is of an infinite conscious--they could never get it all, brother! never! It goes on and on, on and on, it goes on and on, and they can't dig it, they can't dig it, 'cause it's too heavy--it too heavy, bro', it's too heavy. They're bustin' their ass tryin' to figure it out, see they tryin'.

[Rifting like this consists of fairly short clauses, each one of which is repeated with very slight changes. The only clause which is not repeated above is not completed: the other seven items are each said twice]

Quahab's defense of his own production of heavy knowledge before outsiders and unbelievers is that it is only a tiny small sample--enough to provoke, but not enough to inform. To display this much is a kind of boasting--advertising that there is such a vast store of knowledge available that he can afford to throw this much away. But the last sentences of (27) argue that what the outsiders hear, they cannot understand, so it can do no harm to rift in front of them. Quahab's argument protests too much: he and the others find it difficult to understand why they cannot keep from displaying their heavy knowledge, when in fact their ideology says that they should not.

There was a very real hostility expressed here towards all whites, and any group of Negroes who had dealings with whites. the Brothers were not willing to engage in any more such meetings or interviews immediately after this one. It remains all the more curious that they were not able to prevent themselves from revealing as much knowledge as they did--especially the very important fact that the world was coming to an end on the approaching July fourth.

Can rifting be compared to sounding as a means of verbal play in which each person tries to excel the others? Quahab's eminence in rifting is comparable to Boot's in sounding. It would be wrong to carry the analogy too far. Instead of expressing overt aggression, the Brothers address each other as belove', make joint decisions (on fasting, for example), and all strive to express the same point of view. Rifting is used to channel aggression into verbal skills, but against outsiders. The black scientist Yakub who created the white man is one object of attack:

(28) --Yaku himself. He's the devil.

Q: --He so low, sister, he so low that he can't get above six.

--Tha's a deep one.

Q: --He fell a victim to the pig an' the pig is ancient. [laughter]

--But tha's a sl--tha's a slick one, though.

--Dig on, they bury him six feet deep. [laughter]

Quahab has sounded on Yakub, and the group evaluation is the same as after a successful sound in the Jets Microbus session. One can also sound against "Negroes" who do not accept Islam:

(29) --Wrath will fall upon those who are unenlightened [laughter]

--Those so-called lost Negroes.

--And ain't never been found.

As far as the content of rifting is concerned, verbal aggression is directed outward, beyond the group, and it is thus fundamentally opposed to sounding. Rifting is parallel to sounding in that there are a limited number of ritual formulas, such as (25) and (26), and some are able to master more of these than others; there is also a technique of improvising, as in (27) where many short formulas are combined and repeated. In both of these skills, Quahab excels the others, and his delivery is longer, louder, slower, and more musical than the others. He serves as the leader while the other Brothers background.

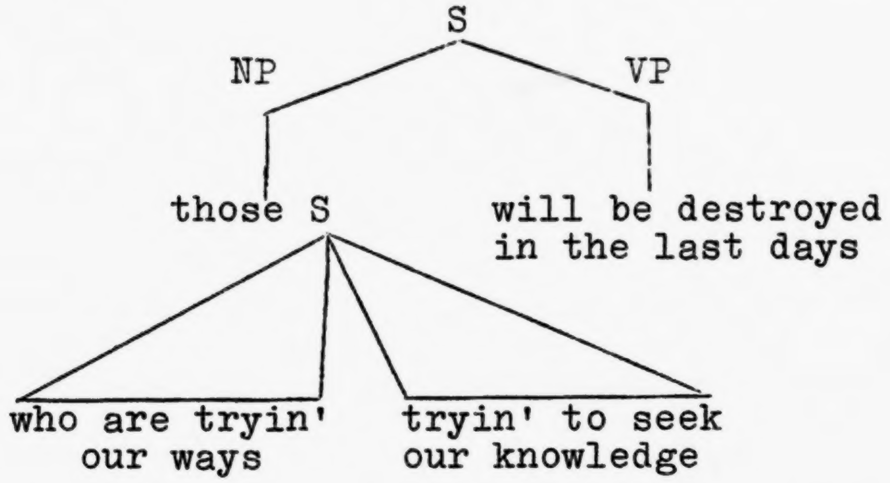
The grammar of rifting. At various points in this discussion, we have pointed out that the morphology and syntax of rifting is a formal variant of NNE. By this we mean that whenever there is a variable rule, we tend to get the fuller, uncontracted or undeleted form, still within the bounds of the NNE system. This is most striking in respect to the copula and auxiliaries: am, is, are, will, have all appear frequently in their full forms. It was noted in 3.4 that such full forms are indeed more characteristic of NNE than WNS or even colloquial SE, But the rules remain variable: in Quahab's statement (27) we get:

it is of an infinite
i's too heavy
it too heavy
it's too heavy

The phonological rules of consonant cluster simplification are treated in the same way, with roughly the same proportion of variants as in ordinary speech. On the other hand, those rules of NNE which are invariant remain invariant. For example, we find that negative concord applies with the same obligatory force to all indefinites. There are a great many examples of such negative concord in the quotations given here in (13, 20, 22, 27, 29)--and there is no variation. In the NNE preterit, *ain't* alternates with *didn't*; in the present *ain't* alternates with *not*, but not with *isn't*, and that is the case throughout these examples.

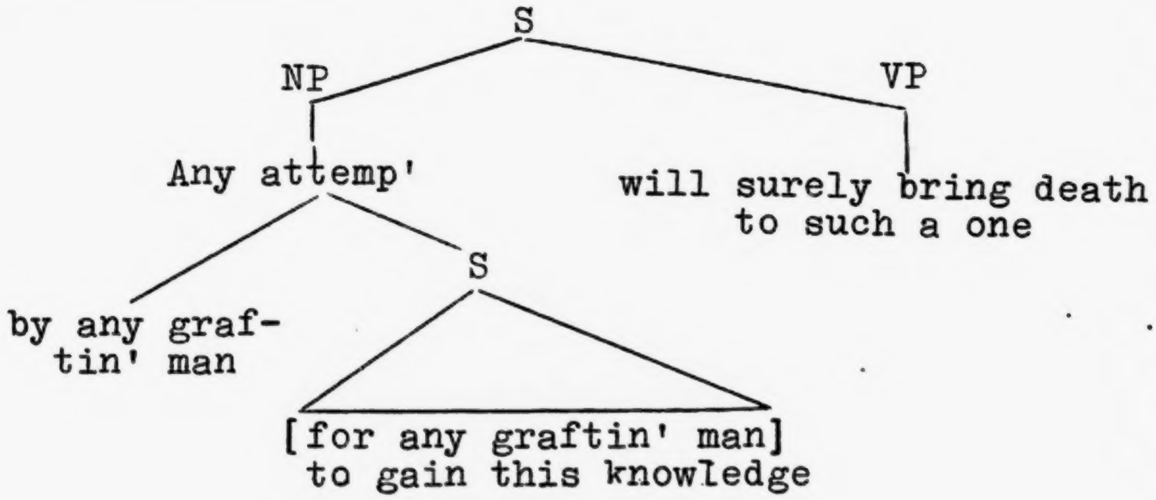
Some of the fixed formulas of rifting show complications in their subjects which depart from normal colloquial style.

(25)


S
NP
VP
those S
will be destroyed in the last days
who are tryin' our ways
tryin' to seek our knowledge

The deletion of the head of the original noun phrase, those *men*, those *guys*, etc, to yield a simple *those* is one of the stylistic markers of rifting: *those who are unenlightened*, etc. In the following example, there is an even more complex subject, with a formal kind of anaphoric reference *such a one* which refers to an element in a subordinate phrase of the subject:

(26)


S
NP
VP
Any attemp'
will surely bring death to such a one
by any graftin' man
S
[for any graftin' man] to gain this knowledge

Such formulas are not productive; they must be memorized as they are. There are a great many fixed phrases which are inserted into longer sentences, or sometimes even chanted in isolation:

(30) Q: --X is only a name brand--
a purposeless,
a materialistic process.
--istic process
--process

Rifting is a form of display, of both knowledge and verbal style. This short exposition has been primarily descriptive, and we have not been able to enter into the rules for personal interaction in rifting as we have in sounding. One question which remains open is the first step in the analysis of discourse: we have yet to determine the level of seriousness at which rifting is carried on. We have seen that the level of seriousness of ritual and personal insults must be known to determine the appropriate response. When the Brothers debate with one another, or threaten outsiders, we do not know what these acts mean until we determine the level of belief according to the content. At many times, the Brothers let John Lewis know that they believed that he had fallen, or was about to fall, and he interpreted the chants of (26) as threats directed against him. But the interpretation of such threats depends upon the primary decision as to the manner in which the Brothers hold their beliefs. There have been many indications given above that there is an element of play involved in rifting, yet there are many reasons for arguing the contrary. One of the most striking things about the Brothers' beliefs is that they are non-rational. Ideally, one would like to sit down with an individual brother who was friendly enough to answer any question, and pursue with the logic of common sense the implications of these beliefs as they would apply to everyday life, if they were followed consistently. What would be the result? In the following individual interview, John Lewis does exactly this with Akbar, one of the most verbal of the Bohemian Brothers.

Akbar on the square. In February of 1966, John Lewis interviewed Paris (Martin) S. of the Cobras, then the Bohemian Brothers. Martin was one of the five Brothers who carried the attribute *Akbar*. He is one of the core members, who hung out originally with Speedy, but moved with the Brothers who believed in Islam to participate fully in the Muslim phase of the group. In this interview, John Lewis inquired into Akbar's grasp of Muslim ideology with great persistence: in effect, he put him on the square, but without an audience. It was thus possible for Akbar to carry the argument as far as he could, but admit without too much embarrassment when he could go no further. The line of questioning pursued by John Lewis could have been carried out only by someone that Akbar felt was a friend; who was close enough to Akbar and his associates to know what they had been doing in the last few days; and who knew Muslim lore well enough to explore its relevance to their daily lives.

The inquiry into Muslim ideas began as part of John Lewis's usual investigation of beliefs in God, heaven, and hell (and specifically, what color God is). Akbar's answer led the discussion directly to the main principles of black Muslim mysticism.

(31)

JL: Do you believe in God?

A: Nope--I believe I'm G--I'm All*áh*.

JL: You're Alláh?

A: Yeah, I'm God.

JL: But how'd you get to be God?

A: I was always God.

JL: Since when?

A: Huh? Cause I--since when? how did I get to be God? God is the Supreme Being--*Bein' in body is supreme in mind*.

The last line of (31) is one of the familiar rifting formulas. Throughout this section, Akbar uses a drawling, nasal, breathy rifting style on all of the important formulas, with especial length on the underlined words.

Parentheses in Akbar's utterances indicate interjected comments or questions of John Lewis. John Lewis turns to a familiar test question of Muslim mysticism--someone who is Allah can walk through walls. [Note that J.L.'s *could you* means *can you* here (3.5.6).]

(32)

JL: How about this wall [knocks on wall]?

A: Yeah.

JL: Mind's over matter.

A: Right.

JL: Could you walk through that wall?

A: Yeah, if I concentrate.

JL: O.K. Concentrate 'n' let me see you do it.

A: Concentrate, ah hah. Let me see how I could tell you, man. If I walk-- concentrate to walk through the wall? (Mhm) *Men*tally, I'll be walkin' through the wall but my physical *struc*ture won't be able to walk through the wall. (Why?) 'Cause it jus' matter too.

Akbar's reply is the classic way of answering the challenge. But John Lewis pursues the matter in greater depth.

(33)

JL: Umhm, umhm. So why can't you walk through it?

A: 'Cause it--matter 'n matter--don't go together.

JL: No, that's not the answer, is it?

A: Yeh--but matter 'n matter *can't* go together. Could matter--matter 'n matter walk through matter?

JL: Matter can't walk through matter.

A: Right.

JL: So that's **not** the answer, right?

A: Right!

The satisfactory nature of this formula seems to depend upon the hypnotic effect of the word *matter* repeated over and over. The interviewer then turns to another line of inquiry--into the history of Yakub--which uncovers another of Akbar's mystic claims about himself.

(34)

JL: Who's Yakub?

A: Yaku w' black scientist.

JL: xxx...

A: *Born twenty miles outa city* o' Mecca.

JL: Hm--and who did Yakub make?

A: Yakub made (the) devil.

JL: But who made you?

A: I was *never* made. My physical structure was *born* but mentally I was never made. I was always *here*.

JL: Where?

A: On this universe.

John Lewis takes up *here* literally and pursues the notion that Akbar was here before Columbus; Akbar is willing to carry this logic one step further:

(35)

JL: Like, dig, man. Who discovered America?

A: *Discovered* America? (U) America wa'-uh--discovered? It wasn't never discovered. I *made* it.

JL: Made it how?

A: Huh? How I *made* it? Separated the black seed from the brown seed.

JL: That's how you made *America*?

A: I didn't make America --I made America. I built these buildin's.

The notion of separating the black seed from the brown seed is a traditional formula in black Muslim lore. In the last line of (35), there is a point where Akbar first gives a common sense answer, then backtracks when he realized that as Allah he must have made America. The term buildings refers to another major theme of rifting, "building and destroying", which recurs often among the Brothers.

(36)

JL: Uhm..

A: Right. Well, I told the--rather I told the devil to build these buildin's. An' I could tell 'im to destroy. That's what he's doin', destroyin'.

JL: He's destroyin' you too, uh?

A: No, he's not destroyin' I.

JL: He's sendin' all your brothers over to Vietnam.

A: Yeah? So that's not destroyin' I (Huh?) They can't get I.

A tactic in rifting is to refer to the self (in the sense of Allah) always in the nominative I, which indicates the unlimited power of the I. John Lewis begins to press Akbar much harder, to see if he can bring the facts of his real-life behavior into line with his beliefs.

(37)

JL: O.K. Dig this. If you built everything, how come you asked me could you get a job over Columbia?

A: Why could I get a job? Well, my physical structure wants to work cause my physical structure have to live, right?

JL: Your mind has to live too. An' you figure there's a physical structure behind your mind--

A: But, my mind is not part of my physical structure.

The interrogator insists on challenging the separation of body and mind, the fundamental point of Muslim mysticism. It should be noted that there is nothing more irrational in the Brothers' position on this point than in any other mystic system. But John Lewis begins a series of Socratic questions which lead Akbar into a trap.

(38)

JL: Why isn't it? Healthy body, healthy mind, dig? Isn't that true?

A: Yeah, but wait. Yeah, that's right. But my mind is not.

JL: O.K. Well if your mind is not, if I cut off your head, what will happen to your physical structure then?

A: My *phy*sical structure'll die but my mind'll live.

JL: If I dislocate your head from your body your brain'll live?

A: My *mind*'ll live. I don't have a brain.

JL: Your idea will live not your brain.

A: My *brain*.

JL: Not your brain. Everybody have a brain.

A: Yeah, I don't have a brain [laughs]. See you got me there. You stuck a bomb [laughs] under my belt.

John Lewis plays on the two senses of *brain*, and tricks Akbar into contending that he does not *have* one (in the mental sense) by concentrating on the physical sense. If Akbar had been really hip, he should have seen this coming, but he laughs when he is taken in. John Lewis doesn't crack a smile: he is in charge, and he plays it straight. He lets loose a string of Arabic at Akbar, which puts Akbar permanently one down; his feeble effort at interpretation is quickly set aside.

(39)

A: You stuck a bomb under my belt [laugh]?

JL: No, see, I thought you was hip, man.

A: I am.

JL: You hip? What's *bišmilla al rakmen al rakini la hit la hanana nahu, mohamedo al rasulala*?

A: *Bišmilla*, right? That means to kill, am I right?

JL: Uh-uh.

A: What is it?

JL: It doesn't mean to kill. I'm askin' you what it means.

A: I don't know.

JL: Uh-uh.

A: Well I didn't *mas*ter that.

Since John Lewis has demonstrated a greater mastery of Muslim lore, he has now put Akbar on the defensive. He follows up his advantage by bringing the Muslim lore directly into contact with a painful aspect of the every-day world:

the cops. John Lewis's close daily association with the Cobras makes it impossible for Akbar to pretend that this world does not exist.

(40)

JL: What have you mastered?

A: What have I mastered? I masters all.

JL: Like what?

A: Everything you see in existence I master.

JL: Have you mastered them cops out there?

A: Yeah, I master them too.

JL: So why they still beat you in your head?

A: They don't beat me in my head.

JL: Go on out there 'n steal sump'n'.

A: If I steal sump'm' they won't do nothin'.

JL: This afternoon you was gonna steal some beer, right?

A: Right.

JL: What do y'think that cop would have did if you stole that beer.

A: Nothin' but try to catch me.

JL: You think he woulda caught anybody?

A: No.

Akbar's claim that he could master the cop is met with withering scepticism by John Lewis, and Akbar retreats into the usual distinction between the self and the physical structure.

(41)

JL: If he _hada_ caught you what would he have done?

A: Nothin'

JL: Come on, brother.

A: 'Cause I wouldn't a let him _did_ nothin'.

JL: But if he hada caught you--

A: I woulda told 'im I was Alláh.

JL: Man--and when he hit you with that stick what were you gonna say?

A: What I'm a say? Oh! If he hit me with the stick he be hurtin' my physical structure, that's all. Tha's all he would be doin'.

It is clear that Akbar is improvising and he now begins to show overt recognition of the playful nature of the game he is playing. John Lewis does not allow the argument to rest with the distinction between mind and matter, but presses forward against the familiar claim that mind is master over matter.

(42)

JL: But if you master him he ain't s'posta hit you
with the stick?

A: Huh? Well, tha's what I'm talkin' about. Mentally I could master him. Physic--physically, my physical structure cannot master--'cause my physical structure is not but--nothin' but matter. If matter get hit with matter, naturally one of 'em gonna break.

Having forced Akbar to admit that he must be able to master the cop mentally, John Lewis demands evidence. Akbar tries several desperate expedients, and then breaks down. He all but admits that he has lost the game, but more importantly, he admits that it _is_ a game.

(43)

JL: But mind _is_ over matter so why can't your mind...

A: Yeah ..

JL: ... master his matter.

A: But he's a _de_vil. [laugh]

JL: Mh-m. You made him.

A: Right. Tha's right.

JL: So why can't you master him? All of him?

A: Master all of 'im? Let me see how I [chuckle] get out this one. (Dig that) Måster-- see-- how could I master him...I could m_as_ter--I could master him _in_ a _way_.

JL: In a way? Which way?

A: I could master him in a way--like--I could _rift_ on 'im. I'd just rift my heavy stuff; what I _know_ 'd rift on 'im.

The answer is the one that we have been looking for. One masters the cop in the same sense that the hero of Honkey Tonk Bud masters the judge, (4.2.2) and in which the heroes of all the toasts master those with power over them: by the force of words. Like sounding, _rifting_ is a way of exercising control over others; in this case tinged with mysticism, but it is hard to believe that the mystic strain goes very deep into Akbar's way of looking at the world. The essentially playful nature of rifting is revealed in the easy way that Akbar steps out from behind the scenery, and announces that the action is suspended until the players are better rehearsed.

4.3 Relation of Peer Group Status to Linguistic Behavior

In 4.1, we discussed the structure of the NNE peer groups and some of the gradations of membership, or distance from these peer groups. Previous studies of sociolinguistic behavior have relied upon random samples of isolated individuals for their primary data; but there the analyst must try to explain this behavior by hypothetical constructs of an interaction pattern with others--a pattern which has not been observed. In this study, we have obtained our view of the basic vernacular by direct observation of peer groups--white and Negro--engaged in the kind of spontaneous interaction which occurs in everyday life. The methods which we used are described in detail in Chapter II; some quotations from these group sessions were given on 122-125. . In this section we will discuss the ways in which the peer group controls the language of the adolescent boys we have studied. In one sense, this is the most crucial section of our report, since we are here dealing with the factors which make language what it is--which mold its evolution and which stand in the way of less systematic efforts of the school to alter or enrich linguistic behavior. In Chapter 3 we studied the internal structure of NNE in a number of areas--the interconnections of rules which we showed there will be helpful in designing teaching methods which can operate upon the system in the most effective way--particularly in eliminating vernacular interference with a "superposed" standard English. Any such operation presupposes that the more fundamental problems of _motivation_ and _permission_ have been solved. By _motivation_ we mean that the student has acquired the inner conviction that the new form of language being offered him is useful for his own ends. _By permission_ we mean that those external social forces which dominate the child's everyday life do not prohibit or interfere with the use of this new language--in a word--that the peer group will tolerate the acquisition of standard English. This formulation may seem exaggerated, for a hang-out of six or ten boys may seem relatively powerless compared to our massive formal institutions. But in reality, the schools, with all the legal support which the adult world supplies, are weak forces for youth in the urban ghetto. The sanction of principals and the approval of teachers have some weight for the boys we worked with, but not very much. On the other hand, the peer group exerts a tyrannical control upon its members, in ways that have been briefly indicated in 4.1-2. In this section we will show the effect of the peer group upon language in three ways:

4.3.1. The relation of peer group membership to reading ability, as shown by school records.

4.3.2. The effect of peer group membership upon phonology and grammar, as shown by the differential indexes of lames, marginal members, and core members of peer groups.

4.3.3. Direct observations of peer group control of language in group sessions.

In the first sub-section we will see some dramatic evidence of how important peer group membership is for education, and show that any test results in the classroom which do not differentiate peer group members from isolated individuals will yield an inadequate view of the problems; in the second sub-section we will show by precise measures how much more distant the peer groups are from standard English than the isolated individuals; and in the third sub-section we will obtain a direct view of the operation of those factors which have led to these results.

4.3.1. The relation of peer group membership to reading ability. In section 4.1, we have seen that the Jets, Cobras and Thunderbirds have a formal structure which may include four officers. Junior organizations are often formed by the appointment of a younger brother of an officer to a leading position among the 10-to-13-year-olds. However, this formal structure can be misleading. The day-to-day activities of the boys are in smaller, informal hang-out groups, determined by geography and age; an individual's association with the larger group is often a matter of formal definition of his identity more than anything else. Yet the ultimate sanction of the larger group and its fighting role is often referred to.

Full participation in the group consists of endorsement of this set of values, and acceptance of a set of personal obligations to others within the same environment and value system. The criterion of formal membership ("you are a Jet" or "you are not a Jet") is often disputed. A few individuals want to be members and are rejected; others could easily be members but do not care to. Full membership, as we define it, means that the individual is thoroughly involved with the values and activities of the group, and is defined as a member both by himself and by others. If some but not all of these criteria are fulfilled, we term the individual a 'marginal member'. The clearest evidence for full membership as against marginal status is provided by the symmetrical and asymmetrical relations in a sociometric diagram. If an individual on the outskirts of the group wants to be a member, yet is prevented by the influence of other environments (family, school) and other value systems, he is classed with other non-members. In each area there are "social groups" which are strongly influenced by adult organizations: we do not include membership in such groups in the category of membership which we are studying.

It has been shown in many similar situations that group membership is a function of age. (e.g. Wilmott, 1966:35) Boys 8-to-9-years-old are definitely outsiders for the groups we are studying, and they have only a vague knowledge of group activities. Membership is strongest in the 13-to-15-year-old range, and falls off rapidly in the later teens. A few 18 or 19-year-old boys act as seniors, especially if younger brothers are serving as officers, but as a rule older boys drift off into different activities.

We have seen in section 2.1.4 that the 14 Jets who were interviewed in the 100's block of 112th street were probably 20 per cent of the adolescent boys in that age range, and we would have to estimate that the number of boys who were fully participating in the street culture was at least 50 per cent of those who lived on the block. Table 2-2, an exact enumeration of the boys in 1390 5th Avenue, gives much more precise information: there are 17 boys between the ages of 9 and 13 who are full members of NNE peer groups, as shown by the sociometric diagrams; there are 38 boys altogether in this apartment house. In this case we can say that the central network of peer groups for which we use the general term Thunderbirds included slightly less than half of the population. The others are isolated or semi-isolated individuals--some kept at home, some who go to Catholic school, some Puerto Ricans, and so on. Our general experience would indicate about 50 per cent of the boys in the age range 10-to-16 are full participants in the street culture we are studying here.

Reading records. In all of our individual interviews, we used a number of special reading tests developed to yield specific information on the vernacular phonology and grammar. (Gray's Oral Reading Test was also given to a section of the population for further calibration on school approaches to reading.) However, the most direct evidence for reading performance in schools is obtained from the Metropolitan Achievement Test given every year in the New York City schools. With the help of the New York City Board of Education, we were able to study the academic records of 75 preadolescent and adolescent boys with whom we had worked in the years 1965 to 1967. The substance of this sub-section is the correlation between the Metropolitan Achievement Reading Test and group membership.

Figure 4-6 shows the correlation between grade level and reading achievement for 32 boys we interviewed in the 110th-120th Street area who are not members of the street culture, or whose group status is unknown (from the Vacation Day Camp series). The horizontal axis is grade level at the time of the test; the vertical axis the Metropolitan Achievement Test score. Each individual's score and grade are indicated by the location of an o. The diagonal lines group together those who are reading on grade level [0], one to three years above grade level [+3 - +1], or one to six years behind grade

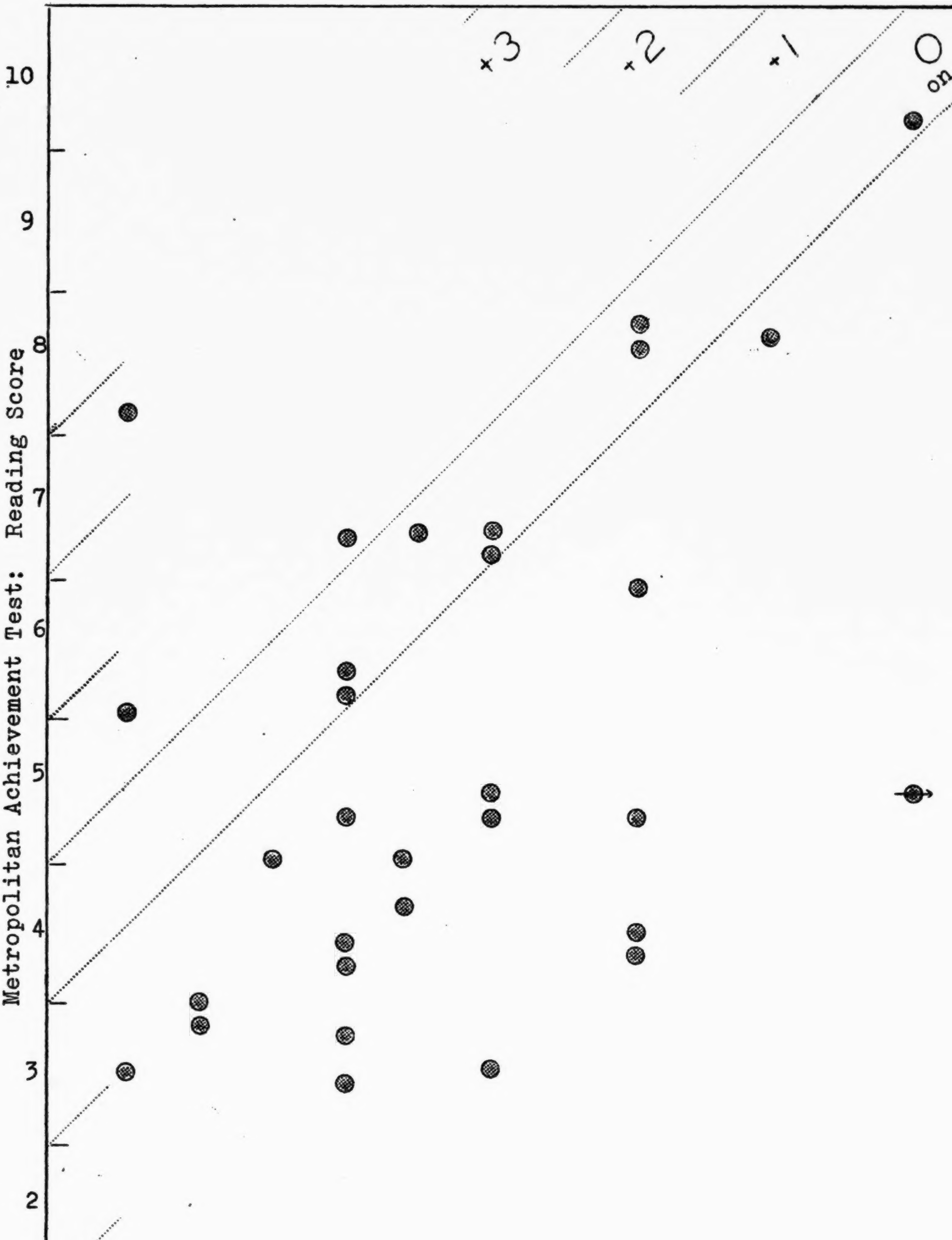


Fig. 4-6. Grade an
ing achievement fo
non-members of str
groups in South Ha

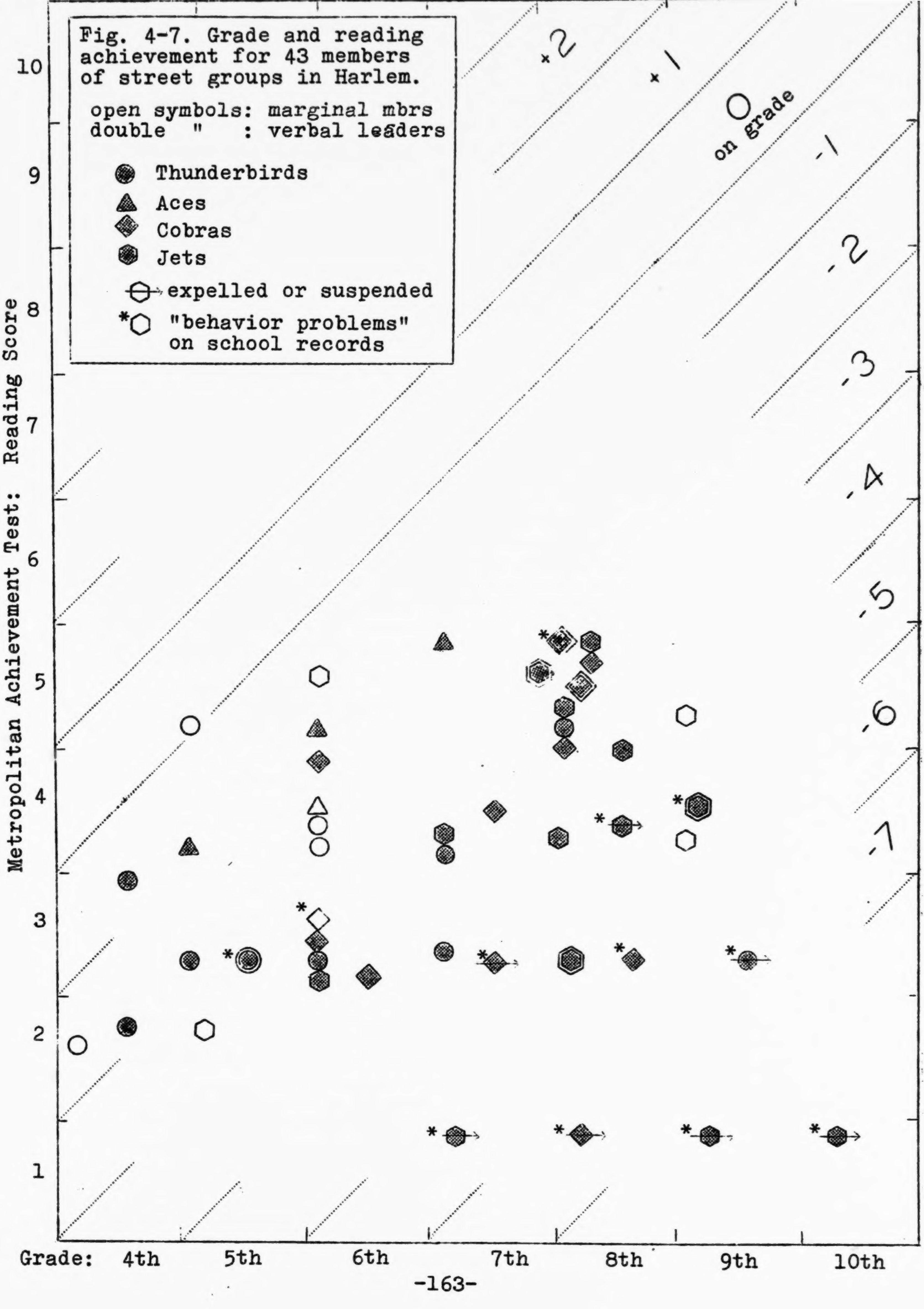


Fig. 4-7. Grade and reading achievement for 43 members of street groups in Harlem.

level [-1 - -6]. As one would expect, there are a good many boys who are two years behind grade, which is average in New York City, but there are also quite a few on grade and some ahead of grade level. Eleven of the 32 boys are on grade or above. The general direction of the pattern is upward, indicating that learning is taking place.

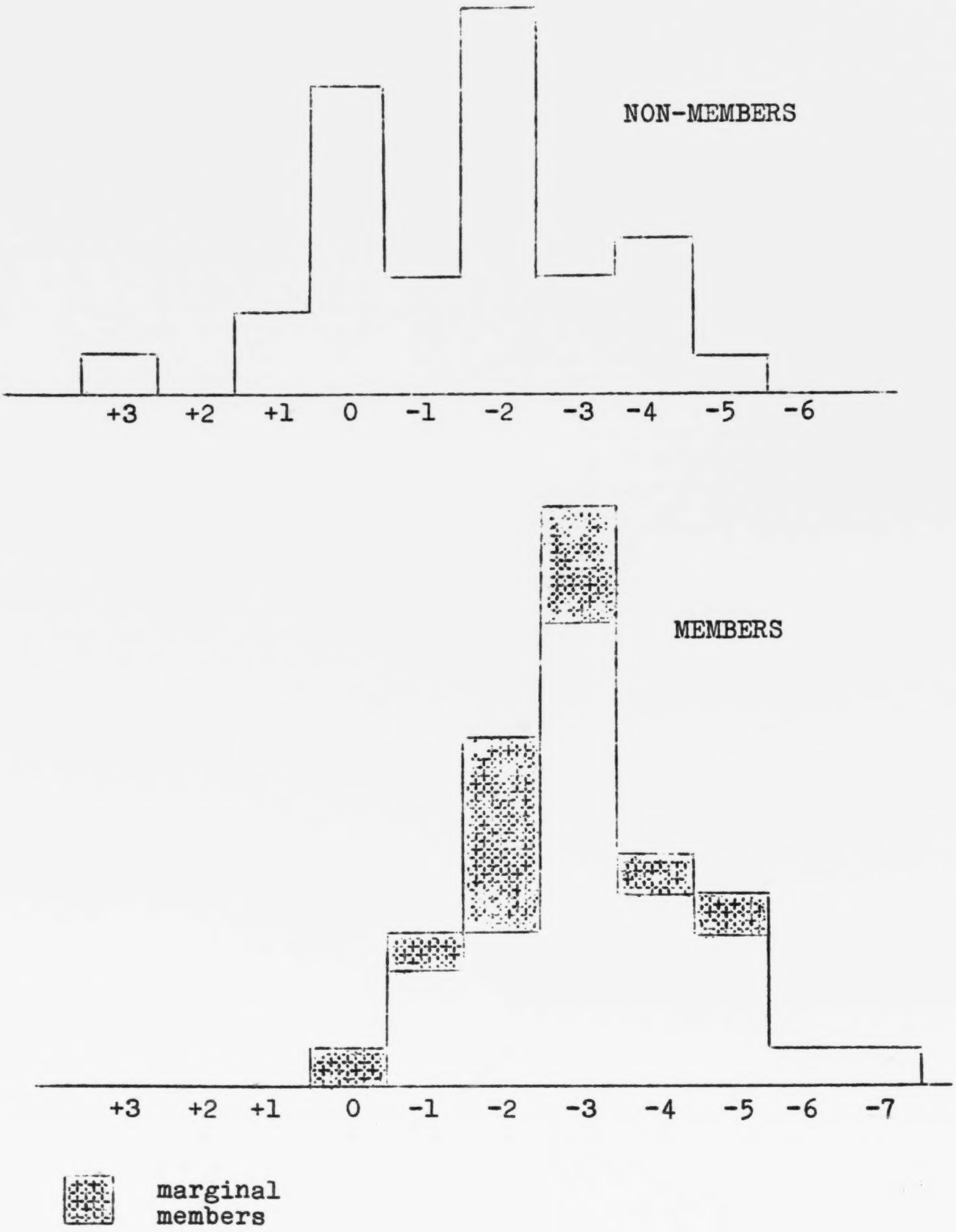
Figure 4-7 shows the same relationships for 43 boys who are members or marginal members of street groups in South Central Harlem. Each individual is represented by a figure symbolizing the group of which he is a member or to which he is most closely related. The **shaded symbols** are full members, and the **open** marginal members. The over-all pattern is entirely different from Figure 4-6; no one is reading above grade, only one boy reading on grade, and the great majority are three or more years behind. Moreover, there are *no* boys who are reading above the 5th grade level, no matter what grade they are in. At each grade, the reading achievement for these boys form a lower, more compact group than for the same grade in Figure 4-6. The close concentration of boys in the eighth grade below the fifth grade level shows a limitation on achievement which is quite striking. On the whole, Figure 4-7 shows very little learning as compared to Figure 4-6.

The lower achievement of group members does not indicate over-all deficiency in verbal skills. Many of these boys are proficient at a wide range of the verbal skills discussed in 4.2. The verbal leaders are indicated by double symbols in Fig. 4-5. While several are clustered near the highest point of achievement, there are other verbal leaders near the bottom of the diagram.

The problems encountered by group members are cultural in origin. Overt evidence is provided by two groups of special cases: [1] Asterisks mark boys whose records indicate serious behavior problems in school--extreme belligerence, repeated violence, with page after page of notes on their records from social workers, psychologists and truant officers; [2] the letters with arrows through them, [P→], represent boys who have been expelled or suspended from school, discharged as over-age, or removed from the sytem by other means; at the bottom of the diagram are four figures representing group members who have been sent to institutions so that their records are no longer available. There are no such cases in Figure 4-6.

The distribution of members, marginal members and non-members according to number of years behind grade is shown in Figure 4-8. The non-members show a bi-modal distribution which is in fact closely correlated with IQ scores. (There is a close correlation between reading achievement and the Pinter-Cunningham IQ test (given in the early grades in New York City in former years) in Figure 4-6 and less markedly in Figure 4-7).

Fig. 4-8. Distribution of non-members, marginal members and members of street groups by years behind grade in Metropolitan Achievement Test.



Members of street groups show a regular distribution around a single mode, three years behind grade in reading. Marginal members, indicated by the cross-hatched areas, are plainly intermediate.

Although Figure 4- 8 does indicate a handicap imposed by membership in street groups, the full pattern of Figure 4-7 is even clearer in this respect: it is the ceiling on achievement in the higher grades which is most disturbing. In our sample, we do not have as many boys 15 or 16 years old displayed, simply because many of them are already disappearing from the school system by one means or another.

The over-all view given by Figure 4-7 strongly reinforces our view that the major problem responsible for reading failure is a cultural conflict. The school environment and school values are plainly not influencing the boys firmly grounded in street culture. The group which does show learning contains a large percentage of boys who do not fit in with street culture--who reject it or are rejected by it. For the majority, Figure 4-7 confirms indirect evidence that teachers in the city schools have little ability to reward or punish members of the street culture, or to motivate learning by any means.

The usual statistics on reading achievement in urban ghettos are alarming, but they do not reveal the full extent of reading failure. Research inside the schools cannot discriminate membership in the street culture from non-membership, and educators are therefore not aware of the full extent of the cultural barrier between them and their students.

It should be understood that the educational goals of the adult Negro community are the same as that of our society as a whole. Our subjective evaluation tests (see 4.6) show that adults in Harlem are almost unanimous in their norms of correct speech and the goals for language teaching in school. Many of the members of the street culture gradually break away and acquire the adult norms in their twenties. However, these norms are of little value for those who do not have the skills to put them into effect.

The reading failure that we have documented here is typical of other performance on the academic records. The pattern of failure is so widespread, in many urban areas, that one cannot hold responsible any one system, school or teacher. The majority of these boys have not learned to read well enough to use reading as a tool for further learning. For many of them, there is no realistic possibility of graduating high school and acquiring the skills needed for the job market. In this particular note we are dealing only with the formal aspect of educational failure. In later publications, we will attempt to document the pessimism and despair with which these adolescents view their immediate future.

The absolute ceiling of Figure 4-7 is of course an artifact of the limited sample. We know from our own tests that there are group members who read very well, whose school records are not presently available. But even these rare individuals view the educational system with a profound cynicism. The majority of those who learn from the system are located in Figure 4-6.

4.3.2. Linguistic indices of peer group membership. One of the underlying goals of the research effort being reported here is to portray the linguistic structure of the NNE vernacular--as it is controlled by the social processes of every-day life. This effort proceeds from the fundamental hypothesis that the vernacular of casual and intimate speech is the most systematic level of linguistic behavior--an hypothesis based upon previous findings and fully supported by current research in urban ghetto areas. Our report of the structure of NNE in Chapter III is based primarily upon the analysis of the group sessions with the central NNE peer groups--the Thunderbirds, the Jets, and the Cobras. Data from group sessions with the Aces, the Oscar Brothers, the Danger Girls and the casual speech of adult interviews was used as a secondary source to supplement this primary material. The analysis of the linguistic indices in more formal styles--reading and the pronunciation of minimal pairs--was used to fill out our view of the over-all sociolinguistic structure of NNE, including both stylistic and social stratification. The group sessions and individual interviews with the Inwood groups allowed us to contrast the NNE groups with the patterns used by white working class adolescents of a comparable age, and thus isolate what is specifically characteristic of the NNE dialect.

There remains a large body of individual interviews with pre-adolescents and adolescents who were not members of any of the clubs or peer groups studied. In Chapter III, these isolated and semi-isolated individuals were referred to as "lames"; their linguistic indices were shifted toward those of middle-class adults (and the white or SE pattern), and showed clearly that they did not represent the basic NNE vernacular as well as the peer group members. It is quite inaccurate to class all of these individuals together--they represent a wide range of social membership and social types. In this section we will analyze the behavior of this residual group more closely, reviewing the ways in which they depart from the pattern of the peer groups, and sub-dividing them somewhat more finely. We will also analyze the largest of the clubs studied--the "Jets"--into its component elements, and see what correlation exists between the finer aspects of peer group membership and linguistic behavior. We will then be much closer to observing the process of social control of language, the primary topic of this chapter.

The pre-adolescent lames. We can make the most precise comparisons between lames and peer-group members through our study of the pre-adolescents in 1390 Fifth Avenue. We were able to make an exact enumeration of the total population of boys living in this thirteen story low-income project (2.1.4: Table 2-2). We found that the central

NNE peer group which we called the "Thunderbirds" included 17 out of 38 boys in this age range. It must be remembered that the formal organization of the "Thunderbirds" had been dissolved and re-formed, and re-named many times under the leadership of the adults in the Stephen Foster Recreation Center; our concept of the "Thunderbirds" was derived from our own observations of hang-out patterns, and information obtained in the individual interviews and group sessions. This information is given schematically in the sociometric diagram of Figure 4-5.

After enumerating the population, we interviewed four of the isolated individuals between 10 and 13 years old. These boys had only marginal connection with the Thunderbirds--they were clearly outside of the peer-group network. They were prevented by a number of factors from associating with the Thunderbirds in daily interaction--primarily by their parents, who put more restrictions on their behavior than the parents of peer-group members. In several cases, parents made deliberate efforts to prevent their children from hanging out with the local children. It is said that there were some boys in the project (whom we have not interviewed) who were never allowed out to play with others at all.

The isolated individuals from 1390 Fifth Avenue are true lames. They are the boys who are detached from the NNE subculture and accordingly fall under the correspondingly strong influence of the school and SE. That is not to say that all of them read well and do well in school--Figure 4-6 of 4.3.1 shows that the isolated individuals in the ghetto are considerably behind the national norms--but they are doing much better than the peer group members. It remains to be seen how deeply this difference in peer group status affects their linguistic structure, and at what points.

A large body of pre-adolescent speech is available in the fifty interviews carried out in the Vacation Day Camps in the summer of 1965. As noted in 2.1.2, this sample was biased away from peer group members, and towards those boys whose parents had enrolled them in the summer program. Furthermore, the sampling technique tended to select isolated boys who were not engaged in active sports with others at that time. The family patterns of this group showed a definite bias away from the NNE groups.

At the same time, the VDC series included some boys who are peer group members; it covers a much wider area than the Jet and Cobra territory and some boys report membership in peer groups we do not know. A few turned out to be members of the peer groups we do know. We would therefore expect that the average linguistic indices for the VDC series would be intermediate between the 1390 lames and the peer groups. In the following analysis we will present four relatively uniform groups of pre-adolescents:

		No. analyzed
1.	The "Thunderbirds"	8
2.	The "Aces"	4
3.	VDC series	10
4.	1390 Lames	4

Table 4-3 shows some of the phonological indexes which discriminate between these four groups. In most of these comparisons we will use style B or C from the individual interviews, for comparison, since only the peer groups give us data on style A from the group sessions. The first index is (r##V)--the percentage of constricted [r] in words before a vowel, as in *four o'clock* (3.1.2, p. 103). The T-Birds, Aces and VDC groups all show a low figure--from .04 to .07, while the 1390 Lames are at 21.

The most finely grained index of social stratification is residual (r)--the percentage of constricted [r] used for underlying or orthographic /r/ when a vowel does not follow (3.1.2. p. 103) Figure 4-9 shows how this index rises from the low level of Style B, careful speech, to reading style and the pronunciation of minimal pairs. The 1390 Lames are highest all along the line; the VDC interviews are intermediate, and the Aces and Thunderbirds are quite similar. What we are witnessing here is the degree of response to the prestige pronunciation of constricted [r], which is even more important in the Negro community than in the white vernacular of New York City (Labov 1966: 237ff, 647). All of the groups respond to this general sociolinguistic indicator, but the 1390 Lames much more so than either of the others.

The (dh) index is not as neat as the *r* indices, which is generally the case for pre-adolescents. This is a composite index which measures the number of non-standard affricates and stops at the beginning of words with standard /ð/: *this*, *then*, *that*, etc. (3.1.1:p. 92) Table 4.3 shows that the 1390 Lames are generally lower than any of the others, although the VDC group drops even lower in Style C. The Aces show a higher index than the Thunderbirds in all styles.

A more sensitive sociolinguistic variable for the NNE groups is (ing)--the percentage of [ɪŋ] variants for unstressed /-ing/ (3.1.7:p. 120). It is typical of NNE speakers to go from (ing)-00 in casual speech to (ing)-100 in reading. All of these pre-adolescent groups show an index of 100 or close to it in reading. But in the intermediate

TABLE 4-3

LINGUISTIC CORRELATES OF PEER-GROUP STATUS: PHONOLOGICAL VARIABLES FOR PRE-ADOLESCENTS

Variable	Style	Aces	T-Birds	VDC Series	1390 Lames
(r##V)	B	06	04	07	21
(r)	B	00	00	01	06
	C	03	10	17	31
	D	26	23	20	51
(dh)	B	144	114	140	84
	C	92	57	20	38
	D	108	70	77	44
	All	115	81	79	55
(ing)	B	00	04	24	(22)
(KD_{mm}) __K	B	98	94	99	93
__V	B	64	59	35	61
(KD_p) __K	B	81	74	81	19
__V	B	24	24	24	16
(KD_{mm} __V) -(KD_p __K)		-17	-15	-46	+42

Fig. 4-9. Use of the variable (r) by pre-adolescent groups.

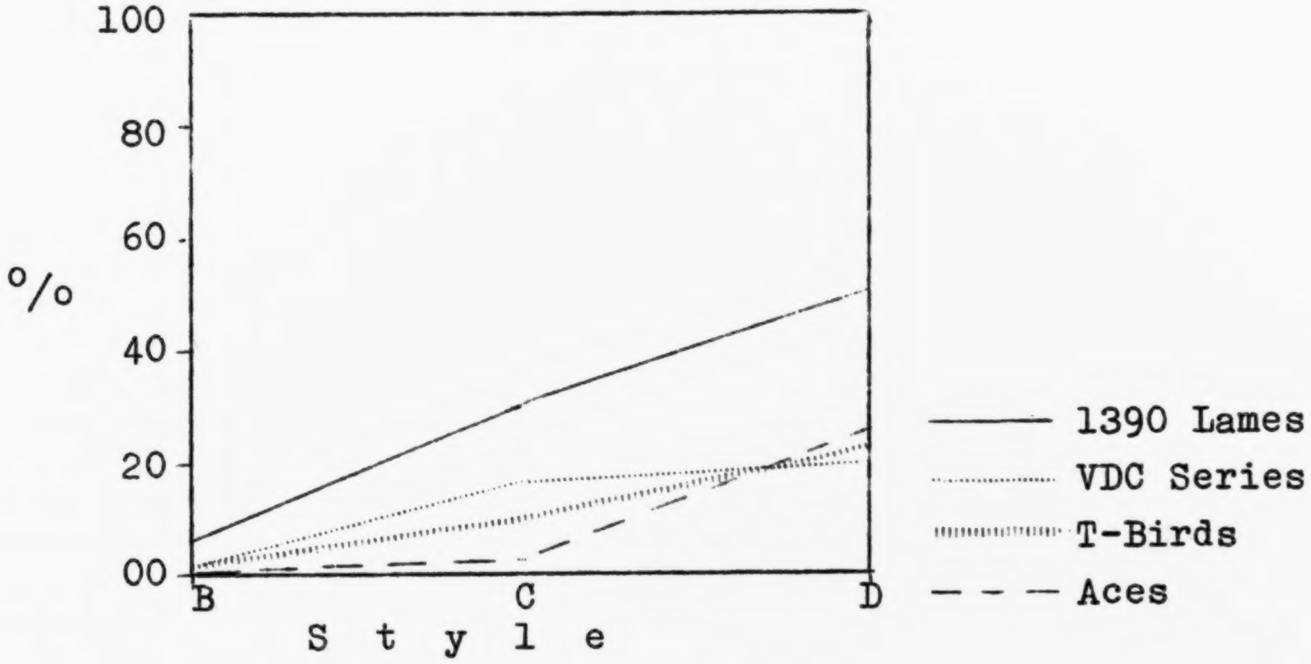
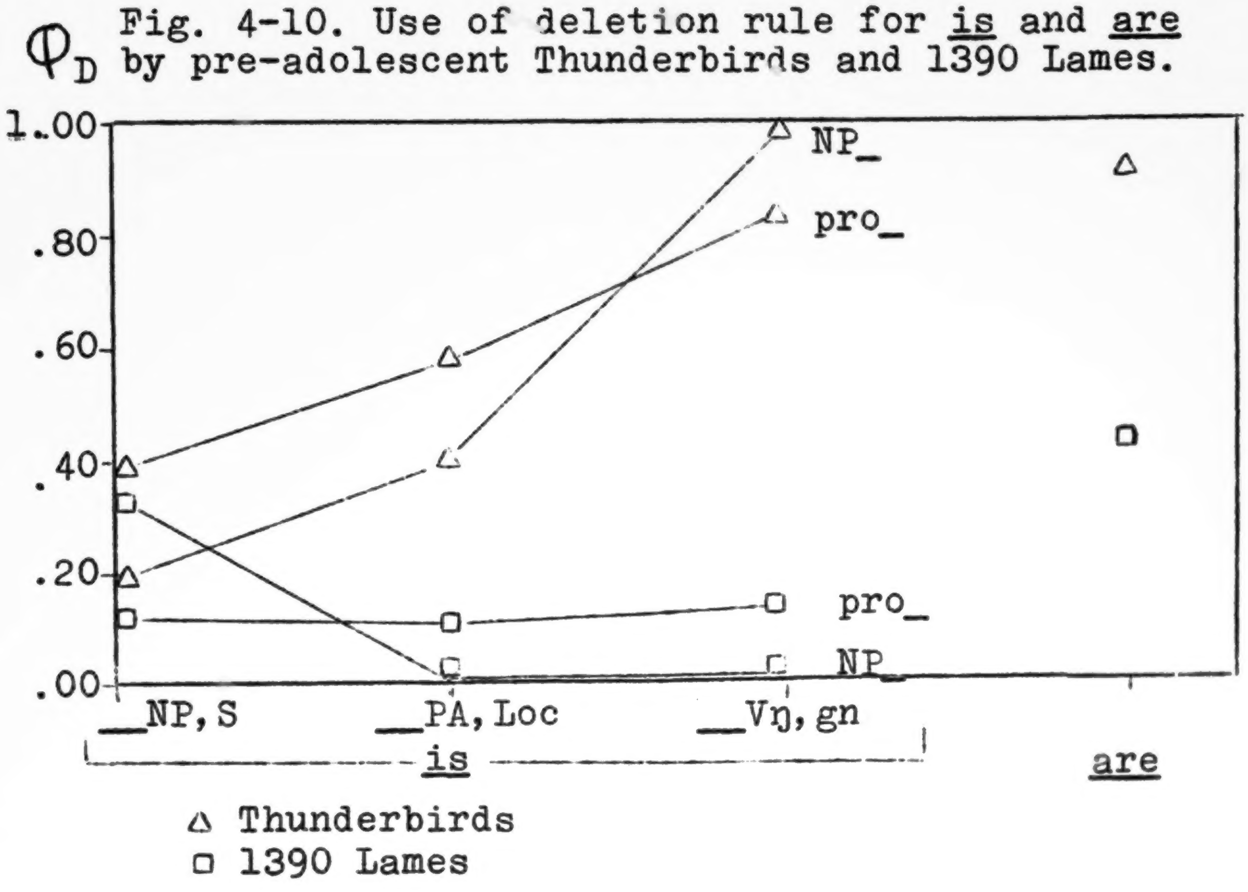


Fig. 4-10. Use of deletion rule for is and are by pre-adolescent Thunderbirds and 1390 Lames.



style B of the individual interviews, there is a distinct difference between the peer-groups and both of the isolated groups, which show the formal [ɪŋ] variant about one quarter of the time.

The last item on Table 4-3 shows the (KD) variables for -t, d deletion (3.2). Figure 4-10 shows the relationship for all sub-groups of the four sub-variables considered here: monomorphemic words like first before consonants and before a vowel, and past tense clusters like passed in both of these environments. The index numbers represent the average frequency of deletion of t-d in these four contexts. The pattern for the two pre-adolescent groups is remarkably similar. As always, all groups show less -t, d deletion before a vowel than before a consonant, and less -t, d deletion when the last consonant is the past tense morpheme -ed. This is a regularity which operates for all individuals as well as all groups. Here we are concerned primarily with the relative influence of both components of the two constraints. This can be seen most clearly in the cross-products: the difference where one factor is favorable and the other is unfavorable. The difference between (KD^{v}_{mm}) and (KD^{k}_{p}) yields a measure of the relative importance of the phonological and grammatical constraints:

Thunderbirds	Aces	VDC series	1390 Lames
-17	-15	-46	+42

The 1390 Lames are in sharp contrast with the others. For them, the grammatical constraint is far more important than the phonological one, since the effect of the -ed in restricting -t,d deletion outweighs the effect of the following consonant in promoting it. In the underlying rule systems, the α and β constraints are reversed (3.2.5, p.137):

NNE rule of Aces, Thunderbirds and VDC:

$$\underline{t},\underline{d} \quad (\emptyset) \ / \ [+\text{cons}] \ (-\beta\#) \ \_\_\_\_ \ \alpha(\sim V)$$

WNS rule of 1390 Lames

$$\underline{t},\underline{d} \quad (\emptyset) \ / \ [+\text{cons}] \ (-\alpha\#) \ \_\_\_\_ \ \beta(\sim V)$$

The second rule has to be labeled WNS [white non-standard] since the standard English of the classroom does not recognize any deletion. But in fact, all white speakers follow the second rule--ample evidence is provided in CRP 3091 (pp 35-45) and in Chapter III (3.2.3). Thus the 1390 Lames show the same fundamental constraints, but a sudden reversal in the order of magnitude of these constraints. This reversal is correlated with significant differences in the ability to read -ed as we have shown in 3.2.7.

We next consider one of the most complex phonological patterns--the contraction and deletion of is and are derived from the copula and auxiliary be (3.4). Here the comparison will be confined to two groups--the Thunderbirds, and the 1390 Lames, who are directly opposed in their relation to the NNE sub-culture. So far it appears that the sharpest difference is between those who adhere to membership in the street culture, and those who are definitely detached from it. The small sample of VDC interviews shows that these individuals do not differ from the basic NNE pattern in any significant way--as long as we extract ~~from~~ the individuals that we know are not truly lame and do ~~not~~ participate in ~~any~~ peer group activity. (We will see that this is not the case with older adolescents, where positive identification with a peer-group seems to be a necessary condition for retention of the vernacular pattern.) Table 4-4 shows the over-all treatment of is and are by these groups in several sub-categories according to the preceding and following grammatical context. The T-Bird pattern is that which has been displayed before in Figure 3-11(3.4.5, p.198). Table 4-4 shows the frequencies of contraction and deletion for these environments for both groups--that is the proportion of cases in which the rules apply.

Despite the limited data for the 1390 Lames, we can see that the operation of the contraction rule is roughly the same for both groups--it operates only about one third of the time when a noun phrase both precedes and follows the verb. On the other hand, the contraction rule applies almost all the time when a pronoun precedes the verb. The figures for the 1390 Lames are too small for us to consider minor departures from the basic pattern.

On the other hand, the treatment of the deletion rule is radically different for the two groups. For the 1390 Lames, it is the contracted form which is favored in all environments. Whereas the percentage of deletion rises steadily for the T-birds with the presence of favoring environments, it stays at a very low level for the lames, who show only a scattering of deleted forms. It is even more remarkable that the same pattern holds for are. We have observed before that the zero form is by far the most common for all the NNE peer groups--since this proceeds by virtue of the deletion of a schwa rather than a lone consonant (3.4.8). But here again, the favored form for the 1390 Lames is the contracted form. In this respect, as in the case of -t,d deletion above, the 1390 Lames have brought their grammatical rules into close conjunction with that of the dominant white society.

Throughout Chapter III we saw that there were a number of grammatical features in which NNE peer group members differed from the isolated individuals. On the following critical items, we can contrast twelve Thunderbirds and four

TABLE 4-4

USE OF CONTRACTION AND DELETION RULES BY THUNDERBIRDS AND 1390 LAMES

	Thunderbirds			1390 Lames		
	F	C	D	F	C	D
is	91	117	119	18	30	4
NP__	43	16	3	9	3	1
__NP, S	43	16	3	9	3	1
__PA, Loc	10	9	6	5	2	0
__Vŋ, gn	0	0	4	0	1	0
Pro__						
__NP, S	4	46	29	1	8	1
__PA, Loc	11	21	29	3	9	1
__Vŋ, gn	0	8	39	0	7	1
are	6	7	67	0	6	5

	φ_C	φ_D	φ_C	φ_D
is	.27	.51	.35	.14
NP__				
__NP, S	.30	.19	.31	.33
__PA, Loc	.60	.40	.29	(.00)
__Vŋ, gn	1.00	(1.00)	(1.00)	(.00)
Pro__				
__NP, S	.95	.39	.90	.12
__PA, Loc	.95	.58	.77	.11
__Vŋ, gn	1.00	.83	1.00	.14
are	.94	.92	1.00	.45

F: full form
C: contracted form
D: deleted form

lames from 1390 Fifth Avenue in their percentage of use of the NNE feature:

	T-Birds	1390 Lames
dummy *it* for SE *there*	79	09
negative concord (to indefinites within the clause)	98	76
embedded questions with inversion of subject and auxiliary	80	20

There are many more such indicators scattered throughout Chapter III. By now it should be apparent that the influence of SE on the lames is pervasive and continuous--though not thorough in the sense of converting their rules entirely to match the SE rules, or even the WNS rules. In the case of negative concord, the influence of the outer society is enough to break down the regularity of the NNE rule. In the other two features, the lames could not show a more striking reversal of the operations of the rules concerned--the scope of the rule is reduced from a strongly dominant pattern to that of a minor tendency. Since most people perceive language categorically, a listener might well conclude that the NNE peer group members *always* used these two features, and the lames *never* did.

Further analysis of Jet membership. It was noted in 4.1 that the NNE clubs such as the "Jets" are formal composites of many hang-out groups, and that these hang-out groups are the primary sites of social interaction. We sub-divide youth interviewed in the Jet area into the various hang-out groups and other categories by the criteria of 4.1 (p. 21), as drawn in Table 4-5. The 100's block, as noted above, was the original locus of the club, and the 200's block joined the Jets in 1965 (Fig. 4-3b). The core members are those who form the central network of reciprocal namings in the hang-out pattern; secondary members are oriented by their relations to one or more of these core members, and are named less often than they name others. Peripheral members of the Jets are those who are partly dissociated from the hang-out pattern by reason of shifting interest or age, but who still have status in the eyes of peer group members.[5] Lames are individuals who live in the same neighborhood, but who are not associated with the network at all--or at most are named by a secondary member. This classification is supported by a large amount of other data gathered in the course of our work. Table 4-6 shows a number of indices, connected with the contraction and deletion rules for a number of these sub-divisions. In previous analyses, the frequency of the rule for deletion of contracted *is* (3.4) has been shown to be the most sensitive

TABLE 4-5

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES FOR ADOLESCENT YOUTH INTERVIEWED IN THE JET AREA

	100's block		200's block
	"6 best fighters"	"pigeon flyers"	
core members of Jets	***Stanley, 16 Vaughn, 16 *Jesse, 16 Ronald, 16 *Larry, 15 (and Deuce, below)	Rel, 16 Bel, 14 Rednall, 14 Dougie, 14 *Peaches, 13 Hop, 12 (and Mickey below)	Junior, 15 Ronald, 14 Tommy, 13 Stevie, 13 Tinker, 13
secondary members of Jets	Pint, 15 **Its, 15 **Martin, 13 Russell, 13 James, 13 Sammy, 13 Champ, 12		Andre, 14 Poochee, 13 Turkey, 13 Ulysses, 13 Laundro, 13
peripheral members of Jets	***Mickey, 19 Deuce, 18 Rickey W. 16 Rip, 14		Ray, 14 Leon, 13 William, 12 Alvin, 12
lames	Steve, 17 David, 17 Edward, 16 Rickey, 14 Donald, 13 Ronald R., 12 Louis, 10 Kenneth, 10		Lawrence, 15 John, 14

Members marked with the same number of asterisks are brothers.

TABLE 4-6
USE OF CONTRACTION AND DELETION RULES BY SUB-DIVISIONS OF THE JETS AND LAMES

	is			are		
	n	φC	φD	n	φC	φD
100's Core	259	.66	.70	109	.99	.84
200's Core	81	.63	.63	51	1.00	.78
100's Secondary	75	.75	.61	14	1.00	.72
200's Secondary	148	.72	.56	32	.97	.84
Peripheral	82	.80	.33	28	1.00	.75
Lame	127	.57	.36	57	.91	.88

TABLE 4-7
USE OF INVARIANT BE_2 FOR *IS* AND *ARE* BY SUB-DIVISIONS OF JETS AND LAMES

	third singular		other	
	n	be_2	n	be_2
100's Core	259	25	109	17
200's Core	81	1	51	14
100's Secondary	75	1	14	0
200's Secondary	148	2	32	5
Peripheral	82	7	28	11
Lame	127	1	57	7

indicator of relation to the basic NNE vernacular and the NNE sub-culture. Table 4-6 shows no differences of any great significance in the frequency of contraction, ϕ_C. Most of the sub-groups range from between .60 and .80; the lames are slightly lower, but this is not the kind of sharp linguistic difference in which we are interested. The frequencies of deletion show truly radical differences. For the core and secondary members, the figures range between .56 and .72; but the peripheral members are at .33 and the lames at .36. The active peer group members show twice as great a value for the operation of the deletion rule! The figures for the contraction of *are* show once more that a very different rule is operating here: there are no differences between any of the sub-groups in the operation of this rule.

We may return to the deletion rule and examine subdivision within the Jets proper. It does not seem accidental that the highest value for ϕ_D is registered by the central core (and in particular, the hang-out group of the "six best fighters" which shows $\phi_D = .72$). The lowest value is shown by the group most removed from this core group--the secondary members of the 200's block, who register .57. It is not clear to us at this time whether this inner differentiation within the Jets is significant and reproducible. But there is other evidence to show that language within the hang-out groups shows the mutual influence of members, and that those who associate closely together do develop variable constraints within their rules which are very similar.

When we examine the use of the invariant *be*$_2$ (3.4.11) for the Jets, we find that the same central core group of the 100's block uses far more *be* than any other sub-section of the Jets. Table 4-7 shows the ratio of *be*$_2$ to all occurrences of *be*$_1$ in environments which call for standard *is* and in those which require SE *are*. There are no striking differences in the *are* column. But the great majority of cases where *be*$_2$ was used after third singular subjects were from interviews with the leaders of the 100's block. The list of those who used more than four or more instances of *be* reads like a list of officers of the Jets Stanley, (President), Rel (Prime Minister), Bel (War Lord), and Jesse. The number two man Rednall (Vice-President) used *be*$_2$ twice in this context.

By contrast, we recorded only three uses of *be*$_2$ altogether from the 100's block secondary members and from all members of the 200's block combined.

It was observed in Chapter III that this feature of NNE is exceptional in another respect: it is used far more often in the deliberate speech of the face-to-face interviews than in the excited interaction of the group sessions. (Table 3-20, p. 236). One may observe that there are few instances of be_2 in any of the extended quotations from sounding sessions given in 4.2. (in the case of Boot and David, *be* was used in personal insults). It was suggested that be_2 has a deliberative character which makes it more likely that it will be used in rational discussion than in provocation and aggravation. Those who are most prone to issue judgments about the behavior of others and about general conditions are more apt to use be_2. This surmise is supported somewhat by the use of be_2 found among the Cobras. Again, it is almost entirely a feature of individual interviews and not of the group sessions. Secondly, we find that be_2 is used a great deal by the verbal leaders of the Cobras who are prone to "rifting"--Derek and Stanley K. in particular. In any case, we find that the use of be_2 in third singular is not distributed uniformly throughout the Jets, but is concentrated in certain specific hang-out groups.

Why should be_2 be more irregularly distributed in the third singular than in the plural and *are* contexts generally? It was suggested above that there are two possible explanations for the fact that be_2 is used almost three times as often in *are* contexts: (1) it has a value as a filler, since *are* is almost always deleted; (2) it is more natural to speak generally about groups and plurals than about singular objects. In any case, be_2 plainly is more *marked* in singular contexts, and is therefore used more meaningfully in the third-singular. It is this meaningful use of be_2 which is concentrated in the speech of the core members of the 100's block.

An examination of the negative concord rule, which is obligatory for indefinites within the clause (3.6.3) shows that there are no significant differences within the Jet groups, and that the lames also keep to the 100 percent behavior pattern. Of the 37 individuals interviewed in the Jet area, 31 showed 100^{o}/o negative concord to indefinites within the clause. The remaining six are all individual cases who do not represent any kind of pattern. On the other hand, the characteristic NNE marker of using dummy *it* for *there* (3.8.1) shows a striking difference between members and lames.

	Percentage of *it* for dummy *there*
100's--core	75
100's--secondary	71
200's--core	60
200's--secondary	84
peripheral members	78
lame	23

One of the most striking contrasts between club members and lames is found in the pattern of agreement in the verb forms and auxiliaries of have, do plus negative, and the past tense of be. Table 4-8 is a reorganization of Table 3-24, contrasting the Lames with the club members on the one hand (excluding the Oscar Brothers), and the white non-standard Inwood groups on the other. The club members use almost invariantly the single form have; the white groups show perfect agreement of has with the third singular and have elsewhere; and the lames are in the middle, leaning more towards the white groups. The club members rarely use the form does or doesn't. With the negative, the white groups use doesn't about one third of the time in the third singular; and the lames use doesn't even more. Finally, in the pattern of was versus were, we find that the club members use was almost exclusively, and again the lames follow the white non-standard pattern. In these three areas we see that the agreement pattern of the lames is closer to that of the Inwood group than to the Jets, Cobras and Thunderbirds. On the other hand, this limited data shows that the lames preserve the NNE form of say ~~in the past~~ (He say) and of do ~~in the present~~ with the positive.

We have observed elsewhere a number of minor linguistic features which operate within hang-out groups. The Cobras show a tendency to use skr- for str- far more than the Jets. The small group which centers around Larry, Jesse and Vaughn has generalized the pronunciation of "an' sheet" [æn ši:t] for the very frequent tag an' shit. The Jets show a characteristic intonation pattern which we hear over and over again in the Jet sessions:

Stanley: Bé cool, thers!
bró-

We will not attempt to enter deeply into such intonation patterns here, except to state that the "Jet sound" is distinctive and overpowering, and can never be mistaken for that of the Cobras. These small tokens of group identification are hardly important in themselves. They do bear witness to the powerful group pressures which are exerted upon language in general. These factors operate so frequently, and so generally, that the fundamental grammatical rules of most group members are quite uniform at any one point in time. Sometimes a member comes from somewhat outside of this NNE sub-culture, but is accepted into the group. This is the case with Vaughn, who came from a school in Washington Heights where he did not hang out with an NNE peer group. He is an excellent reader, and has the ability to do first class work in school by any standard. However, Vaughn's primary loyalty is to the Jets, and in particular to the hang-out group centered around Stanley, and he explicitly rejects the

TABLE 4-8

PERCENT OF STANDARD VERB AGREEMENT FOR CLUB MEMBERS, LAMES AND WHITES

Present tense forms of verb	Club Members	Lames	Inwood [white]
have [3rd sg.]	19	60	100
doesn't [3rd sg.]	03	36	32
were [2nd sg. + pl.]	14	83	100
does [3rd sg.]	00	13	100
say [3rd sg.]	04	00	100
[No. of subjects:	31	10	8]

schoolroom culture in favor of the Jets.

John L.: How long have you been a member of the Jets?

Vaughn: Eh well, about--i's--since last summer you might say, and shit.

John L.: Now- uh - do you feel that you have to be part of the Jets?

Vaughn: Eh well, I feel, I feel that I *should* be, let's say, you understand, because...

John L.: Why?

Vaughn: As far as I know these *men*, yeah these men have taught me everything I know about all this bullshit because I'm uptown, that's like a different world and shit. My mind was poisoned, y'know, when I moved down here niggers started, y'know, hipping me to little things and shit, so y' know, I figure I'm learning from it, so why not, y' understand, why not?

Since Vaughn has come only recently into the influence of the Jets, one would expect that he might very well show grammatical and phonological linguistic patterns which deviate from the Jet pattern. In fact it is not difficult to isolate his indices from those of other members. Whereas other Jets show the usual 100^{o}/o negative concord within the clause, Vaughn shows only 30 out of 35 cases of transfer of negative to a following indefinite. He uses dummy *it* for *there* in only two out of seven cases. Whereas other Jets show 17 out of 18 or 21 out of 22 monomorphemic clusters simplified before a consonant, Vaughn shows only 35 out of 42. Whereas other Jets stay very close to 50^{o}/o for past tense clusters before a consonant, Vaughn simplifies only 4 out of 17--only half as much. Considering Vaughn's recent arrival in the area, and his exceptional ability in school, we may feel justified in removing Vaughn's records from those of the other Jets in our search for the basic pattern. Even though Vaughn is able to give us an excellent, explicit statement of the value of belonging to the Jets, his linguistic system cannot adjust as quickly as his value system or his pattern of living. The remarkably consistent grammar of the other Jets is the result of ten years of continuous contact with the local NNE pattern. Furthermore, there are specific patterns of interaction in the peer groups which control language, and inevitably mold the unconscious grammatical rules to a given form for those closest to the group. Vaughn's case shows us the contrast between explicit allegiance on the conscious level and the absence of identification at the unconscious level of grammatical rule. We cannot observe the direct influence of peer groups upon grammars, but we have observed the ways in which peer group leaders control and model the speech of others. Our most transparent examples are found in the group sessions of the Thunderbirds. We have seen Boot, in the midst of sounding contests with other members, and obtained ample evidence of his verbal dominance in the group. In the following sub-section we will examine other techniques used by Boot to control the verbal situation, and discover evidence of his success.

4.3.3. Social control of language within the peer group. In the analysis of speech events in 4.2, there were many points at which the social control of language became visible to us. The models provided by toasts (4.2.1) and sounds (4.2.2) are always present for peer group members as a positive point of reference. When a pre-adolescent begins to memorize hundreds of lines of toasts, it seems inevitable that the rules of his own grammar will be reinforced or altered. For example, a line such as

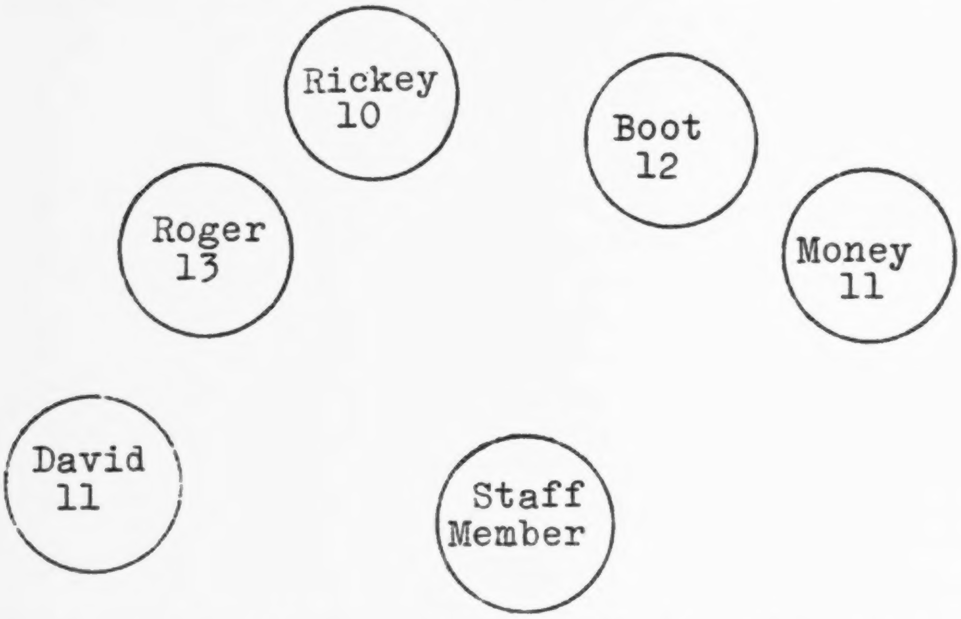
> There wasn't a son of a gun who this whore couldn't
> shun

shows the NNE speaker that it is possible to extend negative concord to the preverbal position in a following clause. Such models might be lost or ignored in the course of daily conversation, but with the model of the toasts they are preserved and reinforced. White adolescents may hear Negro speakers occasionally use such forms, but they have no contact with such formal models as these.

In the same way, a great many elaborate sounds are memorized and imitated. The social control of language can be seen even more strongly in the evaluation of sounds--in the approval or disapproval which is given to almost every sound. But it is in the patterns of generalized sounding (4.2.4) that one can observe most closely both positive and negative control over language. Certain expressions are repressed in the sense that they will subject the user to ridicule. Any euphemisms which are seen as avoidances of taboo vernacular forms--and in that sense are "good"--will provoke a negative reaction in the group. There are a wide range of formal expressions which are never heard within the context of group interaction, although the practice of rifting (4.2.5) allows a wider range of formal language than is normally thought possible.

In this sub-section, we will view directly the processes of verbal control in the second Thunderbirds group session. This is one of the first recorded group sessions in which each speaker had an individual microphone and track; in some ways, there is more influence of the staff members, and less interaction among members than in the Jet and Cobra sessions where the techniques had been developed further (see 2.2.2, p.57, ff). But in this Thunderbird session we have an opportunity to observe one verbal leader, Boot, who dominates the patterns of conversational interaction, and magnifies the processes of control that occur elsewhere.

There were five Thunderbirds present at this session, seated as indicated below. Again, we find that the seating



pattern chosen by the members reflects the personal relations quite accurately. These five members are at the center of the Thunderbird structure--see Figure 4-5 for the sociometric diagrams which show their place in the over-all pattern. Boot has one immediate follower, Money, who stays very close to him: Boot used to beat Money up, but found out recently that Money was his first cousin, and after that he stopped. Money sits turned in his chair so that he faces towards Boot, even when a staff member asks questions directly of the group. We have already seen in the sounding session (4.2.2) that in the group context Boot represses Money. When Money is pressed to initiate sounding himself, he says, "Boot one of the best sounders of all." Rickey, on the other hand, falls under the special protection of Roger, the non-verbal leader. There are any number of occasions in which Roger protects or sponsors Rickey, and in which Rickey looks to Roger. Since Roger is not prominent in verbal interaction, this will not appear as a factor in the records cited here. The fifth member of this session, David, is somewhat on the outside of things. He is fat, and is continually reminded of this fact. A favorite personal insult is "David got titties like..." On the other hand, David shows a fierce determination to be a member of the Thunderbrids, and fights back vigorously against any attempt to push him out. As we have seen, he has considerable perseverence, and more internal resources that one would imagine at first from the stereotype of the fat boy others are continually trying to fit on him.

The family situations of the members also show the ways in which they fit into the NNE peer groups. Boot's father did not live at home with him; he lived with his step-father and a number of half-brothers. The family received welfare support at that time. Roger's father was not at home, (serving in the air force); his mother did not work and received welfare support. Rickey's father was not at home, living in Brooklyn; his mother was a nurse, but was receiving welfare support at this time. Money's father lived at home, but he was sick and could not work; his mother did office work, and a 20-year-old cousin also worked and helped support the family. David's father and mother were both at home; his father worked as a porter, and his mother as a typist. According to a staff member of the Recreation Center, David's family gave the children "everything" in the way of clothes and spending money, but exercised little control over them.[6] The children played outside late at night. One of David's older brothers has already dropped out of school. The comment on David was that he "over-identified with the group", which fits our own view of his firm determination to be a member.

When one turns to the records of any group session in which Boot was involved, it is his voice which emerges. One microphone was placed to record the group as a whole, and on that tape Boot comes through strongly and continuously. When a question is asked of the group as a whole, it is Boot who answers. Furthermore, he does not allow anyone else to answer: he assumes that all questions are directed at him.

```
WL      Did you guys ever go outside your own block
            and get involved with
```

```
WL      guys from other places?
Boot      Yeah.     We got--hunnert tent'--Hey, dig. He
Money       Yeah.          Yeah!
David                      Yeh we-- we have--
Rickey
Roger
```

```
WL                          Now wait a minute! Wait a minute. Go
Boot    aksin' me; he ain't aksin' y'all.
Money                                      O.K.  you don't hafta
David
Rickey
Roger
```

WL	head. You-- I want everybody have a chance to talk.		
Boot			
Money	fight.	Whyncha getcha hands off!	
David		Dawwwwg, man!	[silence].
Rickey			
Roger			

In this extract, a question is asked of the group as a whole. Before the question is finished, Boot answers "Yeah". A half-second later, Money echoes Boot's response. David gives the same response a second later. This pattern is repeated a great many times in the group sessions with the Thunderbirds.

David not only echoes Boot's and Money's reply, but he attempts to continue. "we have--". In the meantime, Boot has begun giving his full answer, but he now stops to repress the others. "He ain't aksin' y'all!" He punches Money, within easy reach, who whines back at him in protest. David also protests: "Dawwwg, man!" The staff member tries to quiet everything down with the idea that everybody will have a chance to talk, but this is somewhat optimistic when Boot is present. He does succeed in silencing everybody else, and then continues.

Boot is continually engaged in this activity of shutting up, even when he has the floor, since the others never give up entirely. Many of the short comments made by others are not audible to someone in the midst of the group, but the lavaliere microphone picks up a great many remarks muttered by members under their breath. When the level of group interaction rises to a maximum, then the noise level is so great that almost anything can be said by someone under the assumption that he will not be heard. We therefore get a great deal of "private speech in public" where ideas are externalized that would ordinarily be kept to oneself. But even in relatively quiet scenes like these, the lavaliere microphone picks up members speaking more or less to themselves. It is true, of course, that most remarks muttered "under one's breath" are intended to be heard. The more prominent are picked up by Boot, and rebuked.

Boot	We had a fight with	seventeenth street-tsk!
Money		
David		forty
Rickey		
Roger		

Boot	Did I aks you? We had a fight with forty,
Money	
David	
Rickey	
Roger	

Boot	seventy--seventy Lenox--we had a fight with Taft,
Money	[Lenox]
David	Mmmmmm.
Rickey	
Roger	

Boot	Johnson, Lincoln,--we had a fight with most all the...
Money	Taft
David	[Puffing into mike].
Rickey	
Roger	

Boot is here naming the groups which the Thunderbirds have fought. "Seventeenth street" refers to a group that lives on West 117th Street, two blocks north of the T-Birds. "Forty" and "Seventy" refer to the groups living in the two buildings in the same low-income projects, at 40 and 70 Lenox Avenues. David interjects a contribution of his own, "forty", but he is reprimanded by Boot, who then takes up this suggestion in his own next sentence to David's annoyance. Money simply echoes quietly to himself some of Boot's main points. But David is not content to be Boot's echo. He has been repressed, but he protests (to himself) "Mmmmm", and then begins puffing into the microphone. David cannot fight Boot indefinitely; but he will not passively follow him. He withdraws from the group, and sits whistling and humming quietly to himself.[7]

Boot	To get the Os-
Money	
David	[Whistling, humming . . . . .
Rickey	When--whene--whenever we be in trouble, we always
Roger	

Boot	car Brothers.
Money	That--we
David	
Rickey	send another person back to--uh--bring 'um or we
Roger	

```
Boot                    Shut up, Money.
Money    bring 'em back and beat 'em up.
David
Rickey    send them back and get. . .
Roger
```

The pattern of imitation is omnipresent in this group session. In some of the later group sessions with the Jets and Cobras, there was continual interaction among the NNE members so that the staff members could hardly be heard if they wanted to be. But in parts of the T-Birds session, one can observe patterns of verbal response where the staff member puts in a stimulus; that stimulus is received first by Boot; his response triggers responses of the others, who in turn trigger others, until the original stimulus dies out. Then a new stimulus will initiate another cycle. The pattern shows that not all are equally receptive to an outside stimulus. Money is completely tuned in to Boot, and David also, whether he likes it or not. In the following passage, the pattern of echo responses is very clear. Rickey first answers the IV'ers question for himself, since he is not under Boot's immediate domination. But Money can only echo Boot's word "small". We then get several other echoes in rapid succession.

```
PC                         Who?
Boot   We send a small guy.          Like--like--Keefe
Money                           Small--    Keith--Keith
David                                             Keefe
Rickey                        Keefe
Roger
```

```
PC                                                Wait--
Boot   and Kenne'.     We send Kennuff, cause Kennuff
Money   and Kennuff.
David   or Kennuff, or
Rickey
Roger
```

```
PC      what's his name?                     Yeah, what's
Boot   is tough.          Keefe?  Kennuff?
Money
David                     Cecil.
Rickey
Roger
```

```
PC     his name?
Boot             Cecil?  Kennuff?
Money                      Cecil.   Kennuff!
David                             Cecil or Kennuff or
Rickey
Roger              Kennuff.
```

```
PC                              Those are three differ-
Boot   Keefe.         We send Cecil most.
Money         Keefe--Keefe?
David
Rickey
Roger
```

```
PC     ent guys?
Boot              Uh-huh.
David                    Yeah.
Rickey
Roger
```

There is considerable confusion here, because the names Keith and Kenneth are said rapidly together, with underlying th realized as f: [kifn̩kɛnəf]. This was hard for us to interpret, and sounded like a single name, no matter how often we heard it. Then it gradually emerged that this referred to the nine-year-old twins, Keith and Kenneth, who lived on the eleventh floor. Cecil is another nine-year-old, Rickey's younger brother.

In the following passage, one hears Money echoing Boot's responses "Larry" and "No" immediately after Boot gives them. Then Boot says "Alvin don't", (short for "Alvin don't know...") This triggers an hilarious response from Money, who repeats the word "Alvin" over and over again, screaming at one moment and using a long, whining falsetto at the next. David is infected with the same virus, and this play on the name "Alvin" goes on while Roger and Rickey enter into the conversation.

```
WL     Who's tougher, Alvin or Larry?          Is Larry
Boot                                  Larry.
Money                                   Larry.
David
Rickey
Roger                   D-D-D-D-D-Dem nigger's wild!
```

```
WL     older?
Boot           No.          And Alvin the dumbest!  Alvin
Money             No.   Alvin
David
Rickey        Uh-uh.  Alvin is.
Roger                       Larry an' Alvin, they ust-they
```

```
WL                                             How come?
Boot   don't!  Aks him to spell "hurricane" yesterday.
Money            Alvin don't [L]  Alvin don't![screaming]
David
Rickey
Roger  didn't--do--they didn't fight with us.  They didn't
```

WL	
Boot	
Money	
David	Why?
Rickey	
Roger	fight with us. I don't know why; they jus--

WL	They did? Why?
Boot	Hunh? I know.
Money	Oh, damnnn!
David	Alviinnn!!!
Rickey	That's his. That's his.
Roger	they turned yellow.

WL	
Boot	[Aks him to spell
Money	Alvinn! Alvin!
David	
Rickey	
Roger	Tsk-Sometime they don't wanna fight. You know--

WL	
Boot	it out: Mr. Cohen.]
Money	
David	Everybo--
Rickey	
Roger	and sometime--dat's why they don't come to club

WL	
Boot	
Money	He can't spell it?
David	Everybody alw--
Rickey	
Roger	meetin'. So I - I put 'em out.

In the midst of this commotion, there is an important passage which reflects Boot's attitude towards the gathering of information. He ridicules Alvin because he could not spell "hurricane" the day before. While everyone else is turning to the question of why Alvin and Larry don't fight, Boot is still concerned with this question of spelling. As it will be pointed out later, Boot is the worst reader of the group. He cannot spell hurricane himself (or anything close to it). Yet he is afraid that he might be asked to spell it. He cannot lose face by asking directly, so he whispers to Money: "Aks him to spell it out: Mr. Cohen", referring to Paul Cohen, one of the staff members. Money misunderstands, thinking that Boot wants to test Mr. Cohen rather than get the information, he asks: "He can't spell it?"

Roger speaks quite a bit in this passage. Since the question concerns fighting and the role of members in a fight, this is a question which properly falls under his domain. Roger is quick to point out his authority: it was he who put Larry and Alvin out of the club. He is here referring not to the hang-out group which we call the Thunderbirds, but to the formal club just previous to that time which held meetings, elected officers and even considered collecting dues. Larry and Alvin continue as secondary members of the peer group network which is determined by the patterns of daily interaction. The criteria which Roger cites for putting Larry and Alvin out are the two basic criteria of group membership in all the clubs: the obligation to join in the fights which the group has with other groups and coming to"meetings"(in the formal sense). It is not only that Larry and Alvin cut some of the formal meetings that the Thunderbirds held--it is that they cannot be depended on to go places when the group goes. It is interesting to note that unlike the five members discussed here, Larry and Alvin have an "intact" family; their father works as a maintenance man, and their mother stays home and takes care of the children.

The denial of group membership is an important means of control. Boot is always trying to push David out of the Thunderbirds, denying that he is a member. The following passage concerns meetings of the T-Birds:

Boot	... 'cause we broke up.	
Money		
David		No-one ever came any more.
Rickey		
Roger		

Boot	You wasn't in the Thunderbirds.	
Money		That's right...I know.
David		Well I know.
Rickey		
Roger		

Money agrees with Boot that David was not there, but David insists that he knows about the Thunderbirds, just the same. In regard to the second criterion, that one must fight with the Thunderbirds, David is also rebuked by Boot. David insists that he did fight; picking up the ambiguity of the word with, he insists that he is with the Thunderbirds and not against them. But Boot denies this. Note that Roger is tactfully neutral in regard to David, who is present, but gives a firm opinion on Alvin and Larry, who are absent.

The first group session with the Cobras also had five members: Speedy (15),Eric (15), Derek (15); Junior (13) and Eddie (11). Speedy is the president and leader of the Cobras at this time, although there were signs that he was beginning to lose control, as noted above (4.1). Eric was his immediate follower--related to him in the same way that Money is related to Boot; Eric commanded very little respect among the other Cobras. Derek was the most accomplished member of the group in verbal performance. Eddie was precocious for his age, and was known as one of the best thieves and for his extraordinary intake of alcohol. He was considered the leader of the "Little Cobras".

The interaction among the Cobras is more even-handed than among the Thunderbirds. Speedy does not control by loud talking; he tends to use gestures and a great deal of eye movement. The following passage concerns an incident famous in the history of the Cobras--the time they shot the chicken. Here we see Speedy repressing Eddie, who claims to have shot the chicken himself. Speedy here asserts his right to control the group, asking first for a show of hands, then officially denying Eddie's claim. He himself takes the lead in telling the story, with the approval of the group.

```
CR     Which one of you Cobras was there when they
          shot the ts- the chicken?
```

```
CR
Speedy                                        Raise your
Eric                     He didn't shoot it;  everybody
Derek  Oh.             Uh-He didn't--
Jr.
Eddie          I shot it.
```

```
CR
Speedy  hands  (-Ed?)
Eric   got a shot.                          Everybody
Derek
Jr.                     Everybody got a shot.
Eddie                        I shot it!
```

```
CR
Speedy You wasn't even there!  Whatchyou talkin' bout!?
Eric    got a shot!
Derek
Jr.
Eddie        I shot it!  I shot 'im right in his head!
```

```
CR            Well--who shot it first?
Speedy
Eric                                Me!
Derek
Jr.    That's right.
Eddie    (-S?) [X]  Shot 'im!        (-CR) I was second.
```

```
CR     Where did you shoot that pigeon at?
Speedy                            I mean--like--you
Eric
Derek
```

```
CR
Speedy know...  We shot 'im up his--his ass's hole,...
Eric
Derek
```

```
CR
Speedy  and his leg...[smiling]
Eric                           [chuckle]
Derek                   [laughter]
```

It appears that Eddie was the second one to shoot the chicken, and took a major role in its final destruction. In the following passage, Eddie starts to tell the story, but Speedy intervenes and tells it himself. There is a more or less harmonious resolution in this exchange, but Speedy has the last word.

```
KC      Yeah, so what happened?
Speedy
Eric        No.
Derek   No.
Jr.
Eddie                             Me and Speedy--it was
```

```
CR
Speedy
Eric
Derek
Jr.
Eddie   all them chickens back there;  I was scared of
```

```
CR      [chuckle]
Speedy                   Eddie up there kickin' 'em,
Eric          [chuckle]
Derek
Jr.
Eddie      'em!  They was [chuckle] tryin' to bite me!
```

Speedy hittin' 'em, and beatin' 'em with [a] stick...
Then I say, "Hand one over." Eddie say, "[sucking noise]" "Tum!" I say, "Tum." We was gittin' up there on [-] that man say, "Hey, whatchy'all doin'?" We say, "[noises prob. meaning fast movement]. "X X in that

Speedy window, too-- Went over there--
Eddie It was a bitch goin' over that

Speedy Dig it. We put 'im to sleep. I said,
Eddie wall, boah. Doin'

Speedy "Yeahh, baby, when you get home, you gonna have
Eddie one of these in his eyes. [laughter]

KC Yeah, that's how you put 'im to sleep, man?
Speedy a X." Brought 'im
Eddie [We] brung 'im home.

Speedy all ə way home on ə train: we put 'im to sleep
on ə train, let 'im sleep there: brought 'im all ə way home. [snicker] Killt that

CR [chuckle]
Speedy mother.
Derek [chuckle]

In a number of ways, Derek shows himself best in verbal performance among the Cobras. The game of blackjack has a set of special rules and conditions which may or may not apply to a given hand. At the beginning of the last hand, Derek delivers the list in a rapid-fire style, in a single breath:

Speedy: One more hand?

Derek: Good! No pushin'; no skatin'; on or under sixteen; double on three sev'; two nine check; no splittin' aces; no payin' for mistakes; counted. Cut the cards. First man.

Speedy: Ahh! 'L'a's good, baby.

As Derek finishes his routine, Speedy's sigh of satisfaction shows that he is more than satisfied with this virtuoso display. A leader can do more than push the members around; he can express the group's approval of a job well done.

4.4 Classroom Correction Tests

In this and the following three sections we will turn to the results of certain formal tests which were given to our subjects in single interviews. Like any tests, they create context which is appropriate for formal speech; the sociolinguistic frame of reference for any test situation will inevitably resemble that of the classroom. In these investigations, we examined the subject's subjective reactions to variable linguistic forms--we are concerned with whether or not he can perceive differences between standard English and the non-standard Negro English form, what value he assigns to these forms (conscious or unconscious) and whether he can identify the social and ethnic background of speakers by their use of language. This subjective evaluation of linguistic behavior falls under the general topic of this volume--these are the social and psychological factors which lie behind rules for the use of language. The last three sections have considered the ways in which the value system of the NNE community explains their use of language: in this and the following three sections we will be examining the ways in which values have been embedded in particular linguistic forms themselves. The forms that we will be concerned with are those generated by the most characteristic grammatical and phonological rules of NNE as discussed in Chapter III.

The purpose of the Classroom Correction Tests was to discover which of the NNE features that do in fact differ from the corresponding SE forms were perceived as non-standard by NNE speakers. In other words, we wished to know how successful the school had been in tagging certain forms as wrong--in bringing them to the forefront of consciousness of the pre-adolescents and adolescents we have been dealing with. The results give us clear answers to this question on the forms tested. Furthermore, they show us the gradual acquisition of these standard norms as the child grows up in the non-standard Negro English culture. Finally, the results discriminate sharply between lames and peer group members--more sharply than the indices of linguistic behavior itself. In speaking of characteristic NNE reactions, we are fortunate to have available comparisons with the white Inwood group, which allows us to differentiate general WNS reactions from NNE reactions.

4.4.1. Form of the Classroom Correction Tests. The Class room Correction (CC) test was administered at the end of all pre-adolescent and adolescent interviews, except for the older Oscar Brothers. The instructions for the pre-adolescents read as follows:

> Here's some sentences that are a little different. These are the kind that teachers like to correct in school. What if a friend came to you, and said, "Are these O.K. for school?" I'd like you to take a pencil and circle the places that you think have to be fixed, if there are any.

The subject was then handed a piece of 8 1/2 x 11 paper, with the following sentences printed in large (24-point) widely-spaced type.

a. I ate four apple.
b. I met three mens.

1. He pick me.
2. He ain't gone yet.
3. I've pass my test.
4. He don't know nobody.
5. He never play no more, man.
6. The man from U.N.C.L.E. hate the guys from Thrush.
7. Last week I kick Donald in the mouth, so the teacher throwed me out the class.

The interviewer circled the end of the word apple in the first example, and the -s on the word men in the second example. He then said, "Now you do the rest. How would you say each of these after you'd fixed them?" We thus were able to compare the subjects ability to perceive the non-standard form, with his own formal version of the sentences. The large type and the simple form of most of the sentences helped to overcome the fact that most of the subjects are very bad readers. But for many, the problem of bad reading is inextricably mixed with the problem of perception of non-standard forms, so that the contribution of one skill to the other is not clearly separated here. In this discussion, we will be concerned only with the simplest form of the data: whether or not the subjects perceived the non-standard element and corrected it by one means or another. This material is very rich in itself; an analysis of the actual corrections made will be undertaken in a later study.

The non-standard forms which we placed in the list are indicated below:

CLASSROOM CORRECTION TEST

I ate four apple.

I met three mens.

He pick s/ed me.

He ain't gone yet.

I've pass ed my test.

He don't know nobody.

He never play s/ed no more, man.

The man from U.N.C.L.E. hate s/ed the guys from Thrush.

Last week I kick ed Donald in the mouth, so the teacher throwed me out of the class.

The variables which we were examining can be grouped as follows: (a) *Third singular zero*: the absence of an *-ed* or *-s* inflection on the verb in sentences 1, 5, 6, and 7. Sentence 1 is the simplest example since this is the only non-standard element in this short sentence. Sentences 5 and 6 are more difficult because the sentences are longer; Number 5 also contains another non-standard form--negative concord--and the word *man* as a form of address, which draws considerable attention. We believed that 7 would be even harder because this sentence is the longest, there are two other non-standard forms, and the *-ed* comes in a phonetic context where it is hard to hear it. Numbers 1, 5 and 6 would normally be corrected by adding either *-ed* or *-s* after the verb, but 5 could be corrected by inserting *will* after *he*, and 6 could be corrected by changing *man* to *men*. In 7, the addition of *-ed* is the only way to change it to standard English. (b) *Have without -ed*. Sentence 3 has *I've* without an *-ed* following the verb. There are many ways that this NNE form might be corrected to SE, but any one of these should reflect the speaker's understanding of the contracted form of *have* coupled with *-ed*. It has been observed above that the *have* is often deleted in this position, and when it is present the *-ed* will very often be missing. We are here concerned with the perception that standard English requires both forms. (c) *Negative concord*. Sentences 4 and 5 show negative concord with the underlying *any*. (d) *Irregular preterit*. Sentence 7 contains the non-standard preterit *throwed* instead of *threw*. (e) *Ain't*. Sentence 2 contains the non-standard form *ain't*, which may be interpreted as equivalent to either standard English *isn't* or standard English *hasn't*. (f) *Out of*. In sentence 7, the non-standard form *out the class* is used instead of standard *out of the class*. (g). *Slang*. Two lexical items were used which are normally considered slang from the standpoint of classroom behavior--*man* as a term of address in sentence 5, and *guys* in sentence 6.

In estimating the difficulty of these items in advance, we felt that wholly stigmatized forms would be most prominent and most easily recognized. Secondly, we expected that those forms which are phonologically most different from standard English would be easily recognized; thirdly, we believed that embedding the item in a longer sentence with other non-standard forms would make it more difficult to perceive. The main focus of classroom correction is on inflection and forms of the verb; since prepositional phrases are not of as much concern, we believe that the correction of *out the class* to *out of the class* would be least likely to be brought to the attention of students in school. Finally, we argued that the grammatical status of the elements in NNE would be the most important factor--whether or not the non-standard form was produced in speech by a rigid rule or optional variant. To sum up the factors involved in performance on a CC test would be:

1) Social stereotypes.
2) Phonetic substance.
3) Number of competing items.
4) Phonetic context.
5) Grammatical status in NNE.

It is obvious that a short test such as this would not allow us to factor out all of these inferences; no one could weigh them all in advance or predict their interaction. However, we set up the following provisional prediction, from least difficult to most difficult.

		Sentence
1.	ain't	2
2.	throwed	7
3.	nobody	4
4.	no more	5
5.	don't	4
6.	pick-	1
7.	hate-	6
8.	play-	5
9.	I've pass-	3
10.	kick-	7
11.	out the class	7

More importantly, we felt that the lames would score much higher on the CC tests than the peer group members, since they were plainly more open to the influence of the classroom culture. If we were right in thinking that close attachment to peer group membership was not consistent with easy acceptance of schoolroom culture, it would follow that those who were detached from the peer groups would necessarily perceive the NNE forms in the light of standard English judgment. At the same time, we have seen that there is some learning of middle-class norms throughout adolescence. The previous work in New York City shows that the acquisition of standard English norms and behavior followed an upward slope with increasing age for all social groups--even though lower social classes operated at a lower level throughout this process (Labov 1965). We would therefore expect to see a general rise in the scores of the CC tests with age, still preserving the difference between lames and peer group members at each age.

4.4.2. Results. The over all results of the CC tests confirm these views of the acquisition of standard English norms; the patterns were, however, much clearer than expected. Figure 4-11 shows the average scores on the CC tests, combining all items into a single index. The vertical axis is the percentage of non-standard forms which the subjects identified. The eleven items listed above are here given equal weight. A total of 123 pre-adolescent and adolescent boys are tested here, divided into 10 groups:

(a) Junior Thunderbirds. 4 younger brothers of Thunderbirds from 1390 5th Avenue, age 8-9.

(b) Thunderbirds. 11 boys, age 10-13.

(c) Aces. 4 boys, age 10-13. (The Aces are a group quite comparable to the Thunderbirds in a neighboring lower income project).

(d) 1390 Lames. 5 boys age 10-12, living in 1390 5th Avenue, but not members of the Thunderbirds.

(e) All PA lames. 52 pre-adolescent boys age 10-12 interviewed in Vacation Day Camps, plus the 1390 Lames.

(f) Jets. 24 boys, age 12-17.

(g) Cobras. 11 boys, age 12-17.

(h) TA lames. 5 adolescent boys, age 15-17, interviewed in the Jet area but not members of the Jets.

(i) Inwood PA. 4 Inwood pre-adolescent boys, age 10-13.

(j) Inwood TA. 3 Inwood adolescents, age 15-17.

Figure 4-11 shows that these groups follow a pattern of age stratification, if we associate each group with the corresponding group of the same cultural background. The lowest scores are shown by the pre-pre-adolescent Junior Thunderbirds, the pre-adolescent Aces and Thunderbirds and the adolescent Jets and Cobras. Note that the scores for the Aces and Thunderbirds are very close together, and the scores for the Jets and the Cobras are also quite close. The scores for the Junior Thunderbirds start at a very low level at .13, rise to about .33 for the pre-adolescents and to about .45 for the adolescents. All the other groups start at a much higher level. There is not only age stratification, but there is a regular pattern of cultural stratification here.

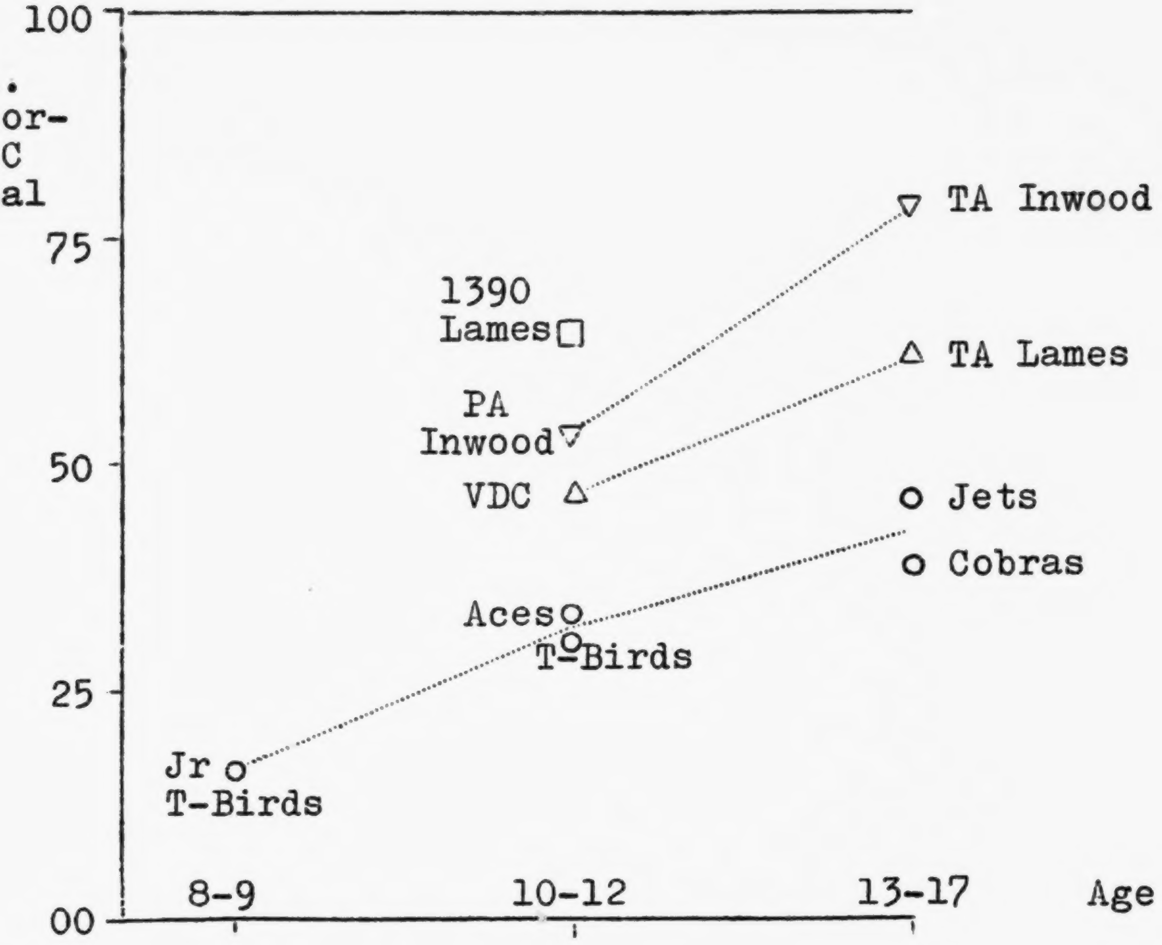


Fig. 4-11. Percent correct on CC Test: total

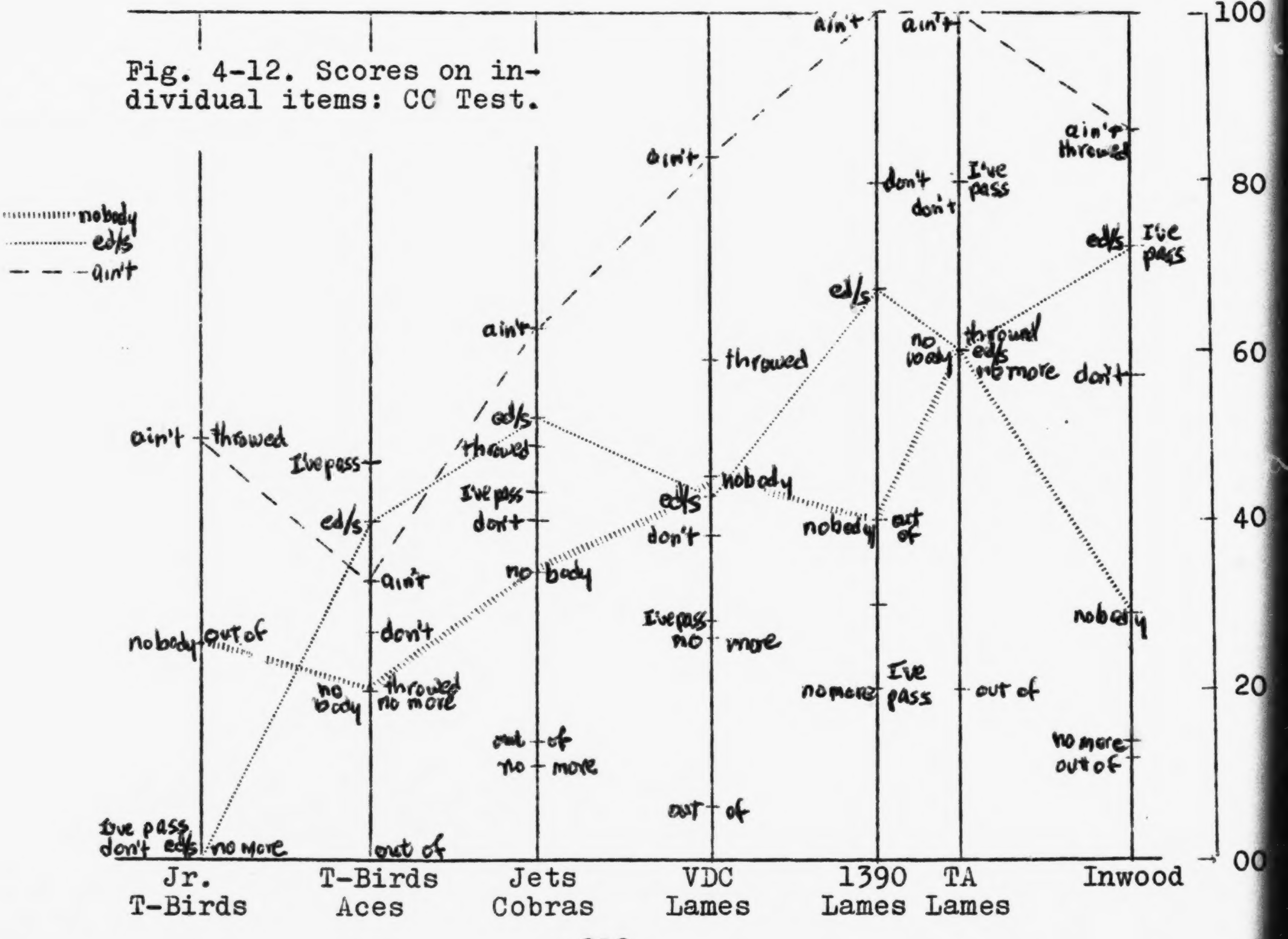


Fig. 4-12. Scores on individual items: CC Test.

The next level of stratification is that of the isolated individuals who were selected without regard to membership in peer groups. For the pre-adolescents, we have the "PA Lames" and for the adolescents, the five "TA Lames" interviewed in the Jet area. It must be remembered that not all of these boys are true lames in the sense of being outside the main stream of the street culture. Some are members of other peer groups, but the majority are not. The Vacation Day Camp series tended to select boys who were somewhat detached from this culture, and most of the TA Lames knew of the Jets but were not members. Their scores on the CC test are well above the peer group members, but not as high as white Inwood groups, which are located one step higher on the graph. Both the lames and the Inwood groups show increasing scores with age. Finally, the 1390 Lames are located above the corresponding Inwood pre-adolescents, at .64. If the connection with NNE non-standard grammar were the only factor involved here, it would be surprising that the 1390 Lames had higher scores than the Inwood group, but a number of the test items were also **common** in the WNS vernacular. The Inwood group show some of the same resistance to the school language, and adherence to their own vernacular, which we observe in the NNE peer group members.

This will be more evident when we note that some of the groups shown on Figure 4-11 are quite small in number, but they nevertheless fall into a regular array when their "social address" as well as their ages are taken into consideration. The pattern of dual stratification we see here is a familiar one. The scores of the younger VDC series are on a level with those of the older peer group members, around .46; the scores of the younger 1390 Lames are on a level with those

of the older "TA Lames". If one does not analyze these groups by their membership as well as their age, this regular stratification would be lost.

When we examine answers to the particular items on the CC tests, some of the numbers involved become dangerously small. However, a number of general tendencies become clearly visible, which indicate which of the factors listed above are most important in determining the perception of the SE norms.

4.4.3. Reaction to individual items. When we examine the figures on particular items on the CC test, we find that some of the totals are quite small and the ordering is not always significant. But there are a number of regular tendencies which throw more light on the relation of NNE grammar to the perception of the standard norms.

In general, there is considerable agreement with the original prediction of order of difficulty given above. The biggest exceptions are nobody and no more, which were marked less often than predicted. This low position of the negative concord items must be due in part to the fact that they are embedded in sentences with other competing items. For all groups, nobody was marked much more often than no more--one reason is obviously that nobody occurs in Sentence 5 with one other item, while no more occurs in Sentence 6 competing with two other items. But the low scores for nobody and no more are also due to the fact that negative concord is used so regularly as part of a semi-categorical rule by NNE members (3.6.3).

The absolute number of corrections in Sentence 3, I pass my test, was much higher than predicted. But in the corrections made by the subjects, 40°/o simply show the 've deleted. Although this results in a correct SE sentence, I pass my test, it does not demonstrate any recognition of have..ed as a possible choice in SE. The ranking of I've pass given below is based on a corrected figure in which these deletions of 've are subtracted from the total responses. There were ten others who did not give any correction; undoubtedly many of these would also have simply deleted the auxiliary.

The predicted ranking is shown below against that actually found, with the percentages of correct markings:

	Predicted	Found	°/o
1.	ain't	ain't	72
2.	throwed	pick-	61
3.	nobody	throwed	49
4.	no more	hate-	44
5.	don't	don't	41
6.	pick-	play-	40
7.	hate-	kick-	40
8.	play-	nobody	38
9.	I've pass	I've pass	33

	Predicted	Found	°/o
10.	kick-	no more	21
11.	out of	out of	13

The four items with zero inflection followed the expected order, but at a higher level than anticipated. Part of the reason is the salient position of *pick-* in Sentence 1, *He pick me*. In other respects, the order of the items reflects the influence of social stereotypes as expected. *Ain't* is the highest, and *out of* is the lowest; these items are respectively the most and the least subject to overt social correction.

Figure 4-12 shows the position of the various items for the groups studied. Here the numbers for individual items can become dangerously small; several of the groups which react in a similar manner have been combined. For the pre-adolescent peer groups, the Thunderbirds and Aces have been shown together. For the adolescent groups, the Jets and Cobras are combined. The 1390 Lames show approximately the same responses as the adolescent "TA Lames" and are shown as one set, and finally the two white Inwood groups are given on a single scale.

The stereotype *ain't* is the most sensitive marker of group receptivity to the standard norms. The solid line **in Figure 4-12** traces the gradual rise of responses to *ain't*, from the low point of the pre-adolescent groups to the 100°/o responses of the lames. The responses to the zero inflections show a similar upward path, (dotted line on Figure 4-12) but by no means as steep; there seems to be a closer correlation with age than with *ain't*, for the curve dips slightly for the PA Lames before going up. On the other hand, the least learning is shown for *nobody* and *no more*, which move up at the lowest rate; the double line shows the path of *nobody*.

The responses to the CC test clearly mirror the position of the non-standard form in the grammar of the subjects taking the test. The responses of the Inwood group differ from those of the corresponding NNE groups in ways that can be predicted from the use of these items in their own speech.

a) The Inwood groups use *ain't* but much less (and in a narrower range) than the Jets and Cobras. Accordingly, the Inwood response to *ain't* is higher than the Jets and Cobras, but lower than for the lames of the Negro community.

b) The Inwood groups do not use the preterit *throwed* for *threw*, and reacted more sharply to this than the NNE members.

c) The Inwood groups rarely lose the -ed inflection and never drop the -s; reactions to all of these items were higher than for any of the Negro groups.

d) The Inwood groups use don't with third singular subjects (see Table 4-8); response to this item is about the same as for the Jets and Cobras, and lower than for the lames.

e) The Inwood groups do use negative concord (see Table 3-26, p.277 of Vol.I) and responses to these items are approximately the same as for the Jets and Cobras.

For items d) or e) the Inwood groups do not show the same semi-categorical rule as the NNE groups do, and therefore their responses would not be expected to dip as low as that of the pre-adolescent NNE group, the Thunderbirds and Aces.

4.4.4. The corrections made. We have already noted that the actual corrections used for Sentence 3 show the marginal status of the have..ed form for NNE members, especially when the have is written in contracted form as 've (see 3.5.2). Of 61 corrections by NNE members, 23 were made by deleting the 've--that is, by indicating that the trouble with the sentence was the presence of this auxiliary rather than the absence of the -ed ending. For a comparison with the white Inwood groups, we have only six corrections--but only one of these deleted the 've.

There is some rich information available on subjective evaluation of the ain't form in the actual corrections made by subjects taking the test. The non-standard character of ain't was clearly marked by the PA Lames, but of the 44 who noted it, only 21 corrected it to isn't and one to hasn't. There were two corrections to haven't, which is understandable in the light of the fact that have is the invariant form for this verb in NNE. The use of ain't for didn't is reflected in the fact that three of the PA Lames corrected to didn't, and one to don't. It was noted in Chapter III (3.4.2, p.177) that another negative form in the present is not (which represents the negative with deleted copula); two of the PA Lames corrected ain't to not, giving He not gone yet. The other NNE peer groups showed a similar sprinkling of non-standard corrections, including such forms as He ain't go yet. On the other hand, the Inwood groups simply corrected to isn't or hasn't in accordance with their own grammar.

Finally, it is worth noting that the sensitivity to the non-standard preterit throwed in Sentence 7 was not coupled with a comparable ability to give the corrected form threw.

Of the 60 Negro subjects who marked this form, only 35 gave the correct form threw. On the other hand, all six of the Inwood speakers who marked the form throwed as incorrect gave the right form for the preterit (although two spelled it as through). Again, it is clear that the underlying grammar of the subjects determined their response to a large extent.

Classroom correction tests appear to be a valuable diagnostic tool in assessing the extent of dialect interference with the writing of standard English. If a student does not recognize the non-standard form when it appears in a test of this sort, it seems unlikely that he will hesitate to use it in his own writing. That does not mean that this necessarily interferes with his ability to read and understand the standard form, since most of the NNE subjects have asymmetrical systems of perception and production; they understand the standard forms even when they automatically produce their own non-standard forms in speaking or writing (3.9.2).

It should be noted that adolescent responses to a CC Test are the reverse of adult responses to a Subjective Reaction Test (see 4.6). When adults have been fully sensitized to a social marker, we find that those who use this feature the most are quick to stigmatize it in the speech of others. But adolescents have not developed sensitivity to such linguistic variables, and their ability to perceive the items that have been stigmatized in school is in direct proportion to their use of them--that is, to the strength of the non-standard rule.

4.5 Vernacular Correction (VC) Tests

The converse of a classroom correction test is a "Vernacular Correction Test", in which the subjects are asked to identify SE forms wrongly embedded in the vernacular. Given the fact that the test situation is necessarily a formal one, which directs the subjects' attention to speech, it follows that the SE form will be brought to the forefront of social consciousness. When attention is directed to speech, it is difficult for speakers of a subordinate dialect to perceive their own forms. When they consciously repeat forms in the test situation, their knowledge of SE forms--however slight--inevitably but unpredictably intervenes. For most speakers, there are no clear intuitions (open to introspection) which discriminate between the underlying vernacular and the superposed dialect.

Full support for these observations can be obtained from the "Self Report" tests carried out in the Lower East Side study of the white community. Subjects were asked to select which of four pronunciations came closest to their own. The results reflected their recognition of the prestige norms much more clearly than their actual usage--that is, the self report tests are only another way of reflecting the subject's perception of the prevailing normative pattern, and give us no direct information about the vernacular (Labov 1966, pp.460-474). For example, of those who use more than 30°/o constricted [r] in final and pre-consonantal position, 79°/o report themselves as using this form. But for those who use less than 30°/o [r], most of whom were essentially [r]-less in connected speech, 62°/o still reported themselves as using [r]. This illustrates the fact that subjects' self report of a prestige feature merely reflects their perception of the norm. The same holds true for stigmatized features such as the pronunciation [əɪ] in *first*, *hurt*, etc. Thirty-two subjects used this form; but only 10 out of the 32 reported themselves as using it. The distribution of those who did so reflects the relative perceptions of the social norm in the social classes concerned. In the lower class group, 44°/o of those who used this form said that they did so; of the working class 28°/o, and of the lower middle class, only 20°/o. This runs counter to the general observation that the higher social classes pay more attention to speech and should therefore be more perceptive. We can say instead that the higher social classes pay more attention to social norms and perceive them more clearly.

The considerations just given are the basic motivation for the mode of research in this study. If vernacular correction tests did in fact give reliable results, it would be unnecessary to do long and painstaking field studies. Participant observation methods would be quite unnecessary. Instead of the investigator entering the social situation of the informant, it would be possible to take the informant into the social domain of the investigator. It would then be quite possible to sit down with an informant and study the structure of NNE. Attempts of this sort have been made but the results have been untrustworthy in the extreme. In extended face-to-face interviewing between a standard and a non-standard speaker the latter shifts in the direction of the standard language. Attempts on his part to fight this normal and natural tendency will result in reverse hyper-correction--that is, he will automatically select any form which is different from the standard, since he no longer has any means of discriminating between standard norms and his own usage, as long as he is in a situation which is dominated by the standard language and the standard culture.

In the course of this study, we continually tested and retested our original findings on this question. Despite out reservations, it would be a tremendous advantage to locate a speaker who could accurately report on the vernacular. But given our knowledge of sociolinguistic factors, it is obviously necessary to know the vernacular in advance in order to determine whether someone is accurately reporting on it. The circularity of this situation can be circumvented perhaps by calibrating the speaker's reactions against a set of known items. If a speaker could score 100°/o on a list of items where we were already certain of the vernacular form, then we could begin to test his information on unknown items. This is particularly important because many syntactic forms of crucial interest for investigating underlying structure are quite rare. In the case of the peer groups we have studied we already have accurate data on a great many non-standard forms, which had been used as calibrating items. There are of course a vast number of items such as tag questions, nominalizations, multiple embeddings, and negative concord to following sentences, where our data are inadequate.

4.5.1. Construction and trial of a VC test. We therefore constructed a "VC Test" in the following form:

> The sentences given below were taken from a book that was supposed to be about Harlem, and to show how ordinary people talk. But some of them are wrong, because the writer didn't know Harlem very well. Can you fix these up with as little change as you need to make them sound right, the most natural way that cats who hang out in Harlem would say them?

Example: a. It don't make me any difference.
should be
It don't make me NO difference.

b. He-all and you-all owe me a lotta cashes.
should be
You-all and him owe me a lotta cash.

1. There isn't no difference.
2. He rap too stupidly to be the leader.
3. Us don't do that no more.
4. That's Nick's boy.
5. You are boss, man.
6. This fella is down.
7. She a real stab bitch.
8. Why he do that?
9. How be you today?
10. Don't you jum' onta him no more.
11. Ain't no such thing as a good police.
12. I don't use too much slang.
13. That can't be true.
14. I know can he do that.
15. Hardly have I seen anyone like you, sugar.
16. I dig over the Supremes, man.

This test must of course be administered orally. We first administered it to L.J., a Negro man 23 years old, whom we thought would have the maximum opportunity to score well. He grew up speaking the vernacular, did not finish high school, and had adjusted his own speech toward the standard no further than most of the young men in our Harlem survey. He was fully aware of our concept of "the vernacular" since we had discussed it with him on many occasions. The results may be summarized in the following item by item account which will also serve to point out the function of the items on the VC test.

1) Correctly replaced *isn't* by *ain't*; did not replace *there* by *it*.

2) Incorrectly added -*s* to *rap*. On the second attempt deleted -*s* and replaced *stupidly* by *dumb*. Agreed that *stupid* would be a correct NNE form.

3) Correctly replaced *us* by *we*.

4) Incorrectly approved of the possessive -*'s* on *Nick*.

5) Incorrectly contracted *you are* to *you're*.

6) Correctly replaced *fellow* by *cat*.

7) Correctly asked what does *stab* mean. (a meaningless item invented by us).

8) Incorrectly replaced *do* by *does*.

9) Correctly re-inverted *be* and *you*.

10) Correctly restored the *p* on *jump*.

11) Correctly approved.

12) Incorrectly deleted *too*.

13) Unnecessarily replaced can't by ain't.

14) Correctly inverted can and he.

15) Correctly replaced hardly by never and justified the use of negative inversion here by saying "Talking to a chick you have to be on your best behavior".

16) Correctly deleted over.

It is clear that the response of L.J. reflects a rich knowledge of the vernacular, but the number of incorrect answers show that we cannot learn anything new from him. Even if he had scored 15 out of 16, the 5 to 10°/o uncertainty would render his answers useless when it came to more subtle points. On 4 of the 7 items where L.J. is wrong, he is obviously and painfully wrong, as readers of this report will realize--in putting an -s on the verb in Sentence(2), in preserving the 's on Nick's in Sentence (4), in contracting but not deleting are in (5), and in replacing do by does in (8). Of course L.J. sometimes does use the forms he indicated, but as a report on the basic vernacular, these responses would be terribly misleading. In Sentences (12) and (13), L.J.'s responses might be even more confusing, since he is merely replacing one correct form with another. Nevertheless, L.J. did handle this VC test in a perceptive and intelligent manner. He was caught by none of the obvious traps which we laid: us for we, in (3), stab in (7). The less sophisticated members of the peer groups did far worse as we shall see.

4.5.2. The Thunderbird VC Tests. In the last group session with the Thunderbirds, following the Memory Tests described in 3.8, a Vernacular Correction Test was conducted with Boot, Money and several other group members we had known for over a year. The test was conducted under the most favorable circumstances for eliciting data: in a discussion with the peer group itself, where the formal situation would be least dominant, and members could correct each other. In this setting, one does not obtain accurate information on the ability of each individual member. But the primary interest of VC tests is to explore means of obtaining further data, rather than test the differential capacity of individuals. This session with the Thunderbirds was therefore constructed to give us the maximum chance of getting accurate responses to the VC test cited above. We were much friendlier with the T-Birds than experimenters normally would be in a test situation; we had demonstrated our ability to obtain a large volume of natural and spontaneous speech from them; and we could easily calibrate their responses against what they actually said.

The VC Test was not set up with individual microphones for each speaker--the group was treated as a whole, and the two main speakers identified are Boot and Money. If speakers are not clearly identified, they will simply be introduced by a dash. A staff member first gave a fairly detailed explanation of the goals of the test, following the line in the instructions quoted above. He then read the sentences himself, and obtained responses such as the following:

1. There isn't no difference.

   Money:--There ain't no different.
   Boot: --There's no difference.
   Money:--Ain't no different.

No one replaced There by it, which would be normal (3.8.1), but Money's last response is solid vernacular (3.6.5). It is clear that there is no difficulty in replacing isn't with ain't, just as ain't is easily identified in the CC test. Items which have been long-standing social stereotypes can be isolated by members, but of course that is of little help in a linguistic investigation.

2. He rap too stupidly to be the leader.

   Boot: --He rap too stupid, man; we don't want him to be the leader.
   Money:--He act too stupid!

These are very high quality responses, as compared to L.J.'s original answers quoted above. The -ly on stupid is deleted without any hesitation. If all VC answers rose to this level, the test could be considered entirely successful.

3. Us don't do that no more.

   Larry:--We all don't do that no more.
   Boot: --We don't do that any more.

The false Us is automatically replaced here, and Larry's We all is quite appropriate. But Boot shows the unconscious influence of the test situation by replacing non-standard no with standard any. Since negative concord is semi-categorical in the vernacular (3.6.3), this is clearly not an accurate response. The memory tests showed that Boot is the member most bound by the vernacular, and it is surprising that he would cross up the VC test in this manner. (It should be noted that the memory tests showed replacement of no by any was much easier than never by ever.)

4. That's Nick's boy.

   Boot: --That's Mr. Nick's son.
   --That's Nick's son right there.
   --That's Nick's son right there.
   --Do you know that's Nick's son?

→ 214

←212

The interviewer was struck by this response, since the possessive '*s* rarely occurs in the vernacular. (**Thus Nick boy** is actually a quote from D.R. on the telephone--one of our most authentic records of spontaneous NNE-see (4.7). Here are four responses with Nick's, an SE form. It is clear that the *test situation* is taking over, and the original instruction *to replace SE* by NNE is being unconsciously reversed by the subjects. Boot's replacement of *Nick's boy* by *Mr. Nick's son* shows that he is on the wrong track, and the others follow.

Interviewer:--Which would people say more often,
Tha's Nick's boy or *Tha's Nick boy*?

Boot:--They say, Nick's boy.
--. . .Nick's boy.
Boot:--If he say boys that means more than one.

7. She a real stab bitch.

Money: [laughs]
Boot: --She a real [laughs]--she is a real st-- she is a real stab bitch.
--She is a real stab bitch.

IVer: --What does *stab* mean?
Boot: --She *bad*.
IVer: --Is *stab* a word that people use?
--No. Not that I know of. I ain't -- No.
--Never heard of it till you said said sump'm.

Here we see the copula deleted in the original sentence, but restored in the answer. A completely artificial "hip" word is accepted and repeated as if it was an item in the vernacular. It is easy to see what is going on in this case. But if we had used a real vernacular word which the members did not use themselves, they would have been just as quick to accept it.

8. Why he do that?

Billy:--Why did you do that,man?
Boot: --Why did you do that, man?

IVer: --Don't people say, *Why he do that?*
--No!
--No!
Boot; --Some people that don't speak correc' English do.
--Calvin little brother! [general laughter].

This sentence is one used many times by Larry of the Jets (see 4.2.4), and follows the most common NNE pattern of simple WH- questions (3.7.2). It is clear that the VC test has become a CC test, and there is little that can be done about it. We do obtain some useful information on the vernacular--especially in the comments that are added at the end of each exchange, like *She bad*, or *Calvin little brother*. We can easily compare the responses to No. 4--that no one says *Nick's boy*--to this spontaneous utterance, *Calvin little brother*. But the only way that we know which is which, and feel free to discard the responses to No. 4, is that we already know the vernacular from direct observation. The VC test gives us confirmation of the basic sociolinguistic hypothesis that the most systematic level of linguistic behavior is the vernacular where the minimum attention is paid to speech. As soon as linguistic forms become the focus of attention, the middle class norms begin to intervene. No matter how imperfectly these SE norms are grasped, they are dominant in the test situation.

It is not the case that the Thunderbirds are completely unreliable, and will simply answer anything. If a form alien to both SE and NNE is imposed, no matter how firmly, it will be rejected.

9. How be you today?

--How are you today?
--How you feelin' today?

IVer: --Now you talkin' bout the--I don't mean correct him, but--wouldn't a guy say, *How be you today*?
--No.
--No.
Boot: --Oh you might--he might say, *How you be today*?

The following example may also show a correct response. The item *I know can he do it* is not acceptable in either NNE or SE, since *know* is not a verb of questioning, and the underlying structure does not contain *Q*.

14. I know can he do that.

--It know you can't do that.
--I know you can't do it.

IVer:--Can you say, I know can he do that?
--No.--that don't sound right.
--No.

But this ability to distinguish possible from impossible forms is of little use when an SE form is opposed to an NNE form. No matter how hard the interviewer tried to re-insert the test situation, and restore the original sense of the VC test, the responses show that the SE forms are dominant.

IVer:--One thing I wanna ask you guys...Do fellas on the street say sump'm like--would they be more apt to say. . . *He don't know the way how* to come?or He doesn't know how to come.

Boot: --He doesn't know how to come.
--The second one.
Money:--He doesn't know how to come this way.

The second choice contains He doesn't, which is certainly alien to the vernacular. Secondly, the adverbial pleonasm the way how to is firmly fixed in NNE: again, we are quoting from the telephone conversation of D.R. Nevertheless, the members firmly choose the SE form and attribute it to the vernacular of the street.

This pattern of response to the VC test fits in with the results obtained in the survey of the Lower East Side of New York City (Labov 1966:470-1). When speakers' attention is drawn to a particular linguistic marker, they usually state their firm belief that they use the prestige form--in fact, that they know they use this form because they hear themselves saying it this way in their 'inner ear'. We can conclude that very early in the acquisition of sociolinguistic norms, the prestige pattern begins to invade the audio-monitoring process. Even the Thunderbirds hear themselves as using any form which has already been established for them as "correct" or "school language". In this sense, the VC test is merely another way of revealing the subjects' grasp of prestige norms, parallel to any other method of self-report.

4.6 Subjective Reaction [SR] Tests

The two sets of formal tests described in the last two sections measure behavior patterns which are close to the surface. CC and VC tests ask the subjects to respond to certain overt norms. One set, the norms of the classroom, is easy to evoke and bring into play; the other, the norms of the street, is elusive and tends to disappear in the test situation. But neither set evokes the more deep-seated attitudes towards language which lie below the level of conscious awareness--the internalized norms in which social values determine our view of others. The investigations of Lambert and his co-workers (1967) show that values associated with whole languages or dialects have striking effects upon personality judgments. Lambert's approach uses "matched guises": the same speaker is heard using both forms, and the values associated with the language or dialect are shown in the subjects' differential ratings on a wide range of personality scales. The subjects do not realize that in the randomized series presented to them, the same speakers recur. The most extraordinary fact about such tests is the uniformity of the underlying value system; those who speak the subordinate dialect are affected almost as strongly as those who speak the superordinate form. The subjective reaction tests carried out in the Lower East Side studies (Labov 1966:405-454; referred to hereafter as SSENYC) differ from these in that the language forms being tested are individual phonological or grammatical variables, rather than undifferentiated dialects. Voices of the same speakers recur with sentences which vary only in the particular feature being studied. The variations used here were the natural phenomena which occurred in the course of readings in exploratory interviews. Only one scale of value judgments was used--a scale of job suitability, reflecting the most important middle-class values associated with language.

Our approach to subjective reaction tests in the current study of NNE has been outlined in 2.2.1, pp.53-56, with some details on the methods used. The basic strategy has been to reduce the number of linguistic variables being tested and add several new dimensions to the judgments made by listeners. It has now been established in a sufficient number of cases that certain speech forms are highly valued in terms of the middle-class scale of job suitability. In SSENYC, Negro subjects showed as much or more sensitivity to these social markers as white subjects (Labov 1966:442-6, 652-655). We observe these values being imposed throughout adolescence; the average adult reaches full agreement with the system of social norms in his early twenties (Labov 1965). But when we examine the over-all sociolinguistic structure, it appears that people systematically deviate from these norms, and this systematic deviation forms the complex system which we wish to explain. Part of the reason that working-class speakers do not conform more closely to the middle-class norms which they endorse is that they acquire these norms after their productive capacity has been formed. It is also possible that many never get enough practice in SE forms to achieve productive control. But we must also consider the possibility that the middle-class norms such as job-suitability are not the only ones which are operating to maintain this structure--that there are other norms which reinforce and give value to working class speech. Such opposing norms would be covert in the test situation, and may indeed be difficult to observe in any case, since they are further removed from conscious attention than most social norms. If one asks "Did you ever try to change your speech, to speak better?" it is rare to have someone answer in terms of any other norm but that of "correctness".

4.6.1. Covert values associated with non-standard forms. What might be the nature of such opposing, covert sets of values? We have already seen that the NNE verbal culture rests squarely upon the opposition of "good" and "bad" values--and that peer group members gain status through fighting, stealing, cursing, and their achievements in the field of drugs, sex and alcohol (4.1.7). However, these "bad" values do not survive as the basis of adult NNE culture; they are severely modified in early adulthood. (Evidence for this assertion comes from the content analysis of our adult interviews, which falls outside the province of this report). If the NNE vernacular has positive value for adults, it is not simply because it is reminiscent of the opposition to middle-class norms characteristic of the adolescent peer group. In other societies, it has been observed that the local vernacular shows a cluster of values associated with its survival as the language of the home, the neighborhood, of intimate conversation among friends. It is not uncommon to refer to the value of language as a vehicle of self-identification; certainly at the very least, the vernacular language of the Negro community is associated with that community, and carries the value of identifying a speaker as a Negro. In some contexts, this has not been an asset, and many middle-class Negroes have attempted to erase every trace of the NNE vernacular from their speech, even in their own family. In the present period of rising self-consciousness among Negro people, and the assertion of pride in ethnic identity, it would seem that NNE would swiftly come to the fore as a political and social badge of honor. This has not been the case so far, however; northern Negro leaders of all social backgrounds are fundamentally SE speakers, and their concessions to the vernacular are superficial and trivial from a linguistic point of view. Whatever emotional and political value NNE may have, non-standard grammar is marked as the speech form of ignorant and uneducated speakers. Those who oppose white middle-class society with the most radical nationalist positions are inevitably standard speakers. There is a fundamental contradiction here:

those who would like to use the vernacular as a sign of solidarity with the community, find themselves derogating that community by so doing--demonstrating that its leaders are too ignorant to speak correctly. The social values attributed to NNE, therefore, are those appropriate to informal and colloquial communication.[8]

We have reason to believe that one value associated with the vernacular is toughness or masculinity. The major resistance to SE culture in the schoolroom comes from boys; as noted above at several points, boys' reading and their general educational achievement is considerably behind that of girls. The vernacular is generally used in the mass media to symbolize tough characters who are good fighters and (sometimes) dangerous opponents. The peer group members who use the vernacular most consistently lay claim to toughness and heart and boast about their masculinity in many ways. The vernacular culture of the toasts, the dozens, and sounding emphasizes toughness and masculinity. Although all this adds up to a plausible argument, there is one overwhelming defect: women do not try to be masculine, yet there is no doubt that they are as good exponents of the NNE vernacular as boys (that is certainly the case with the Danger Girls and the adult women we interviewed in Harlem). To argue that NNE is imbued with a value of"masculinity" is to give it a sexual bias which is unjustified. It cannot be denied that the Danger Girls, the Cobraettes, and other adolescent girls of the ghetto are tough, and that they admire toughness in men. (See the comments of the Danger Girls on the leaders of the Cobras in 4.1.). Yet it is not generally the case that adolescent NNE girls achieve status and prestige primarily through hand-to-hand fighting, or promoting such fighting. Eventually, we will need a more general concept than skill in street fighting or masculinity--a set of attitudes and values which are as characteristic of women as men. Nevertheless, we will here concentrate upon the masculine point of view, since our study is based upon male peer groups, and the speakers in the SR tests are all men (the corresponding tests in the Lower East Side study used women as speakers). The form of the question used in our adult SR tests was therefore: "If the speaker was in a street fight, what are the chances of his coming out on top?" The corresponding question for adolescents was simpler: "How tough do you think the speaker would be in a street fight?"

The second set of covert values which we believed to be associated with the vernacular is that which clusters about the notion of identity or community, and is perhaps most readily identified by most people in terms of "friendliness". One might approach this question in terms of how similar the subject feels the speaker is to himself. However, a person may perceive that someone very similar to himself is apt to be hostile, in that he would be competing for the same goals. The question was phrased in the following terms: "If you got to know the speaker very well, what are the chances of his becoming a good friend of yours?"

For both of these questions, the scale for marking judgments had eight points: *Certain*, *Almost certain*, *Very likely*, *Likely*, *Possibly*, *Not likely*, *Very unlikely*, and *Never*. These two dimensions of Toughness and Friendliness were matched against the Job scale, which was used to answer the question, "What is the highest job this speaker could hold, talking the way he does?" An eight-point scale had the terms, *Television announcer*, *School teacher*, *Office manager*, *Salesman*, *Post office clerk*, *Foreman*, *Factory worker*, and *None of these*.

The SR test was administered by playing a tape with ten sentences to the adult subjects at the end of the single interviews. On the first playing of the tape, the subject marked the *Job* scale; on the second, the *Fights* scale; and on third, the *Friends* scale. The forms for marking are illustrated in 2.2.1, p.55. In most respects, therefore, the test duplicated the methods which had been used successfully in SSENYC, with the exception that only 10 sentences were used instead of 22, and three scales were used in place of one.

4.6.2. *The adult sample*. The test was administered to 90 adults in the course of the survey of the middle income Lenox-Riverton apartments, and the tenements and low-income projects in the "Jet" and "Cobra" areas outlined in 2.1.4. These two areas were defined as "middle-class" and "working-class" as a part of the sampling design, but the subjects were then classified on the basis of three independent variables: social class, geographic area, and sex.

Three social class units were set up: middle class [MC] upper working class [UWC] and lower working class [LWC]:

Middle class:	college graduate; *or* head of family has professional occupation.
Upper working class:	head of family has regular skilled or semi-skilled occupation, *and* subject has high school education
Lower working class:	no regular source of support (welfare) or unskilled laboring job; grade school education.

The disjunctive definition is necessary for the middle class category since there are several subjects in the Lenox-Riverton area who did not graduate high school, but have gotten further education by other means, and obtained highly skilled jobs. In the case of the working class groups, there are very few cases of status incongruence, especially among the subjects with Northern background. The "Upper Working Class" combines the white collar workers who are usually grouped within a "Lower Middle Class" and the established sections of the working class. It is the "Lower Working Class" which is identified most easily in this population, since occupation or source of income is an obvious criterion, and this coincides in almost every case with low educational level: only two of those classified as LWC graduated from high school: one has just gotten out of reform school, and has no job, and the other is on welfare. Those in the UWC group who have not graduated from high school have either white collar jobs or good paying working jobs: one, for example, is a chauffeur living in Lenox Terrace.

Geographic background is classified as Northern and Southern. The question is where the subject spent the majority of his formative years between four and thirteen. The Southern group includes those raised in Florida, the Gulf Coast of Alabama and Georgia, the Coastal Southern area of Charleston, central South Carolina and North Carolina; upper North Carolina and and Virginia; and the Southern Mountain States. Of the 39 subjects raised in the North, 30 were born or raised in New York City; the others are from neighboring Northern areas.

The original sampling pattern insured a distribution of approximately four times as many working class speakers as middle class speakers, with an even distribution of men and women. The geographic breakdown was also evenly distributed without any adjustment of our sampling quotas for that purpose.

We then have the following subgroups:

Middle class			
	Northern	men	7
		women	8
Upper working class			
	Northern	men	8
		women	8
	Southern	men	13
		women	16

Lower working class			
	Northern	men	8
		women	8
	Southern	men	3
		women	5

There was only one middle class subject raised in the South. In addition, we have SR tests from 6 Puerto Rican subjects, and a number of other relatives of the principal subjects. Only the main informant of each interview will be considered, so that we have 90 SR responses to be analyzed here. For the Fight and Friend scales, there was some loss, and the numbers are slightly smaller.

We also have a limited number of SR tests from the adolescent NNE peer group members discussed in the preceding sections. As previous studies have shown, the subjective reaction patterns of adolescents are not as uniform or regular as those of adults. They can best be interpreted in the light of the adult pattern, and we will therefore present the results with the adults first.

4.6.3. General strategy of constructing the SR test. The construction of the Subjective Reaction Test was by far the most difficult technical problem of this investigation. This task involved (1) the selection of the crucial sociolinguistic variables for examination, (2) the construction of a reading which concentrated the variables in particular sentences, (3) the location of speakers who could best exemplify the values of the variables to be tested, (4) the selection of test sentences with optimal clarity, contrasting values of a single variable for the same speaker, (5) construction of judgmental scales which register the important covert values as well as overt values in regard to speech, (6) pre-testing the instrument.

After the basic reading "Nobody Knows Your Name" was constructed (Appendix A), 38 speakers were recorded reading this text. All but two were rejected, because their voice quality, reading style, or linguistic pattern were inconsistent with the aims of the test. Two other speakers were located who had a wide enough range in their natural speech patterns to encompass all of the variation needed. Ten to twelve versions of the sentences for each variable were examined in detail for F.K. and W.M., and a small number selected for testing. Six successive versions of the SR test were pre-tested, until the sentences to be used were reduced to the ten of the final version. This procedure was finished one year and three months after the beginning of the investigation. We give these details to make it clear that the construction of a successful SR test is extremely difficult; it requires knowledge of the speech community and of many special techniques. It is relatively easy to tap generalized reactions to dialects as a whole; but to reduce the dependent variable to a single linguistic item is another matter. In the past year, we have observed a great deal of interest in research into subjective evaluation, but few of these studies have exercised the necessary controls. One can set out three criteria for a test which measures subjective evaluation to a single linguistic element:

(1) Opposing values of the linguistic variable must occur in separate sentences spoken by the same person, and this variable must be the dominant(not necessarily the only) difference between these sentences.

(2) The sentences to be compared must be interspersed with sentences of other speakers, and it is essential that the subjects are not able to say reliably which speakers are the same.

(3) The sentences must be the natural speech of members of that community, so that there can be no doubt that subjects are reacting to the same linguistic feature which they hear in every-day conversation.

There are obviously a great many other pre-conditions for a successful, controlled test. These three are cited here because they are often neglected, and they have a direct bearing upon the sociolinguistic value of the results.

The SR tests to be reported here are of the greatest importance for the entire study. They reveal with considerable clarity the underlying value systems which motivate the linguistic behavior described in the preceding sections. It is hoped that studies of other speech communities will be able to develop such techniques further, and add to our ability to explain the language change and structure. To do so will require a deep knowledge of the speech community, and close attention to the elementary principles outlined above.

4.6.4. Structure of the SR Test. The ten sentences played for subjects included four "zero" sentences and three pairs which contrasted the phonological variables. The zero sentences contain none of the linguistic elements of interest. The three contrasting pairs focus on the following oppositions:

a. (th, dh)-1 vs. (th, dh)-2,3: interdental fricatives vs. affricates and stops in initial position in the sentence: If it wasn't this thing, it was that thing, or the other thing.

b. (r)-1 vs. (r)-0: **consonantal** [r] vs. schwa or long vowel in final and pre-consonantal position in the passage: Look Eleanor, everybody can't be a star. I'm not a forward; I'm not a center; I'm a guard. I play the back court.

c. (st^v)-1 vs. (st^v)-0: final -t retained vs. -t deleted in monomorphemic and past tense clusters followed by a vowel, in the sentence: You must have passed it to Lester sixty times, and he missed it most of the time.

The over-all structure of the test tape is shown in the following table. In this chart and in the following further discussion, we will abbreviate the variables to (th), (r) and (st), and indicate the values by + or -. The prestige or SE form of (X) will be +(X), and -(X) will designate the stigmatized or NNE form.

Sentence No.	Speaker	Variable			
1	W.M.	zero			
2	F.K.		zero		
3	T.L.				zero
4	W.M.	zero (So.)			
5	A.M.			+(th)	
6	F.K.		-(r)		
7	W.M.	+(st)			
8	A.M.			-(th)	
9	F.K.		+(r)		
10	W.M.	-(st)			

Thus there are four sentences in which responses to W.M. may be contrasted--1, 4, 7 and 10; three for F.K.--2, 6 and 9; two for A.M.--5 and 8; and one for T.L., who enters only into the zero pattern.

Characteristics of the speakers. The social background of the four speakers of the SR test may be summarized as follows:

Speaker	Geographic background	Education	Occupation
W.M.	Southern	Grade school	Guard
F.K.	Northern	M.A.	Musician
T.L.	Northern	College	Pharmacist
A.M.	Northern	M.A.	Teacher

The important fact about all four is that they were residents of the Harlem community, and their speech patterns were the products of the social factors we are here studying. All were in their late twenties or thirties. Of the four, only W.M. can be said to represent the NNE vernacular of the working class.

In 2.2.1, (p.53, ff), it was explained that the original intention of drawing our data from readings of Nobody Knows Your Name could not be carried out. No working-class speakers were found whose readings were smooth enough to be compared to those of middle-class speakers. It was therefore decided to use spoken patterns, by having the speakers repeat a sentence many times until it was assimilated into their own phonological pattern. Here too, it was difficult to find working-class speakers whose native phonology covered a wide enough range so that we could obtain consistent NNE versions and also consistent SE versions. The problem was made more difficult by our concentration of many instances of the variable in a short passage. We did this so that the effect of the variable in question would be greater than any residual or associated differences in other segments, but this led to many more mixed forms. It was also important not to call the speaker's attention to the phonological form in question, but to get him to shift styles by some more general instruction operation. Conscious attention to one phonological feature inevitably leads to artificial results. Both W.M. and F.K. had the native ability to shift their over-all stylistic register to an extraordinary degree. After they had repeated a sentence many times in a given style, they were asked to shift styles by such general labels as "Southern". Only in the case of A.M. and (th) did we find it necessary to direct the speaker's attention to the form in question, and the non-standard -(th) form has, consequently, a somewhat artificial articulation in that too many of the stops have a fortis character.

The speech characteristics of the four speakers will be discussed in detail as each sub-section of the test is considered. We will first consider the structure, content and responses to the "zero" pattern, and then proceed to the (th), (r) and (st) variables in turn.

4.6.5. The "zero" pattern. The first four sentences heard on the SR test tape are "zero" sentences. Like all of the other sentences on the test, they are drawn from the reading "Nobody Knows Your Name" which the subjects have just read themselves (see Appendix A). There is therefore no danger of the subjects interpreting the content of the sentence as a personal statement of the ~~person~~ speaker. The zero sentences have none of the variables of immediate interest; theygive us the subjects' reactions to the voice quality and style of articulation of the person speaking, and the entire dialect pattern without emphasis on any particular social marker or stereotype. Responses to the zero sentences reveal the fundamental structure of subjective values in the NNE community, and give us the base from which we can interpret responses to the marked variables. Because the differences between the sentences are often elusive and depend upon features which have not been studied in Chapter III, it will be necessary to present as good a description as possible at this point.

The "zero" sentence was drawn from the first paragraph of "Nobody Knows Your Name", and reads as follows: I wasn't too big, but I was quick on my feet, and my jump shot used to drop in when it counted. This sentence contains no (th) or (dh) variable, no (r) and no consonant clusters which are involved with t,d deletion. The quasi-modal used to is a fixed form in which used is no longer a full verb, and the -ed is only a feature of spelling: the universal pronunciation [justu] shows only an intervocalic cluster. The -nt cluster in wasn't is neutralized before the initial t- in too. The -ed ending on counted is not involved in the consonant cluster variable, as the epenthetic vowel is automatic for all dialects. The -mp cluster in jump never loses its final consonant, as noted above in the VC tests.

The zero sentence therefore contains none of the variables which are to be tested specifically in the SR test, and a minimum of other marked phonological items characteristic of NNE. There are several key points where the difference between Northern and Southern dialects can be registered:

Three examples of the diphthong /ay/ in relatively unstressed position, which can be monophthongized and fronted.

The corresponding backgliding diphthong /aw/ in counted which shows characteristic fronting of the nucleus in many Southern dialects.

One instance of -in and one of -en which can show the neutralization of short i and e before nasals characteristic of Southern dialects and NNE.

Three final -t's which can be released, unreleased, glottalized or be represented by glottal stop alone.

Two instances of long /uw/ which can register stylistic shifts in having a nucleus relatively front (Southern) or back (Northern).

None of these features are heavily stigmatized, and most lie well below the level of social consciousness. The /ay/ diphthong is the most prominent, since monophthongization and fronting is used as a marker of style shifting in NNE, ranging from a "Northern" or "formal" [a^{1}] to a "Southern" or "casual" [a:]. But the most important features in which the North-South distinction is registered are tempo, intonation contours, and the development of ingliding diphthongs for the short vowels before voiced consonants--most prominently in big in this sentence.

A narrow phonetic transcription of the four zero sentences is given below.

S1 W.M.
2ɑ 3wʌ̂˅zn̩tʰu˂3bíɪ˄g' 2→ 2bʌd̥ɑ̀wʌ3zk'wíkɔ˄nmɑ3fí·t˺ 2→
2æ˄nmɑ3dž́ʌmp1š̀ɑʔ3jûst2udrɑ̂3pí˄ǂ1nwɛ̀˄nɪ3tkʰɑ̃˂°2n̩ǂd>

S2 F.K.
ᵓa˃ I 3wʌ̂z2n̩ttʰu˂3bíI˄ 2→g bʌd̥a Iwə2zkwí2kɑnma I3fít˺ 2→
ændma I3dž́ʌmp2š̀ɑtjust˷udrɑ̂pɪnwɛ̀nɪ3tk'á°2n̩ǂd' →

S3 T.L.
2a i3wʌ̂z2ˇn̩tʰu2bìg bʌd̥a iwə2z̥k'wí2ˇkɑ˷nma2Ifít' →
'ænma i2dž́ʌmpšɑ̂tjùst˷udrá·pînwɛ̀nɪ2tká°ntǂd1' →

S4 W.M.
2 3ɑwʌ̂˅zəntʰu3bí:g 2→ 2bʌd̥ɑwə3zk'wîkɔ˄nmɑ3fí·2t˺
2æ̂nmɑ3dž́ʌmp2š̀ɑʔ3jû2studrɑ̂3pí͡ə2nwɛ̀nɪ3tkɑ́˂°n̩ǂ1d →

As explained in the description of the methods used in the SR tests (2.2.1) these sentences are taken from our reading, but they are not read. They have been repeated many times by the speakers, so that the original reading style has been replaced by the contours of connected speech. We can characterize the impression given by the voice qualities and delivery of these four zero sentences as follows:

S1 (W.M., UWC--Southern): Voice very deep and full, with some glottalization on the lower tones. Evenly paced and slow.

S2 (F.K., MC--Northern): Lighter and higher voice, with a fair amount of breathiness. Almost as slow as S1 in the first clause, but somewhat faster at the end.

S3 (T.L., MC--Northern): Voice more fully voiced than S2, but not as deep as S1, with a trace of rasp. Sharply clipped articulation, considerably faster than S2 or S1.

S4 (W.M., UWC--Southern): Same as S1, but considerably slower in the first clause.

The characteristic differences in tempo are easier to measure than other prosodic features. The over-all time required for the four sentences are:

Speaker			Seconds
S1	W.M.	(Working class)	5.6
S2	F.K.	(Middle class)	5.0
S3	T.L.	(Middle class-Northern)	4.6
S4	W.M.	(Working class-Southern)	6.0

But the time for individual clauses is a better measure, since the pauses between clauses have no direct relation to speed of articulation. The first clause, I wasn't too big, showed the following duration for the four speakers:

First clause of	Seconds
S1	1.05
S2	.95
S3	.75
S4	1.20

The range of variation of this first clause is thus exactly twice as great as for the sentence as a whole. The longest sentence, S4, is only 30°/o longer than the shortest, S3. But the longest first clause, that of S4, is 60°/o longer than the first clause of S3. If we are to look for a single measure of the social stereotype "Northern" vs "Southern", it would have to be the "Southern drawl". This shows up in over-all duration, but is best measured in terms of the duration of stressed short vowels, as in big. Figure 4-13 shows tracings of the fourth harmonic for each of the four instances of big.[9]

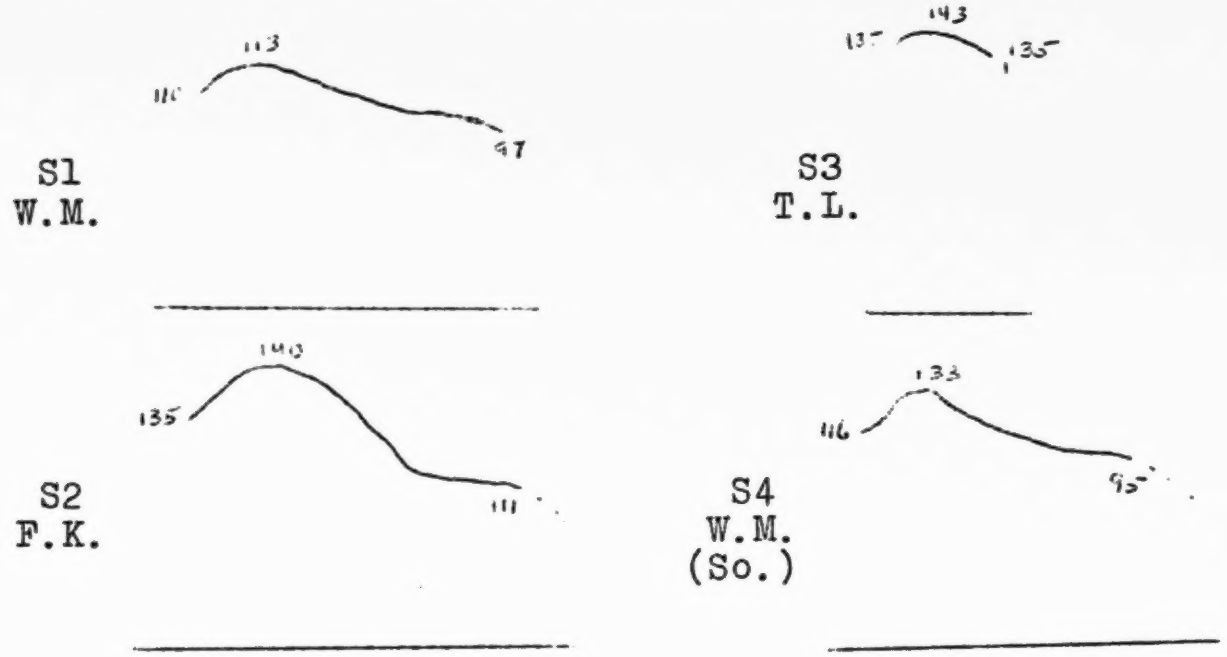


Fig. 4-13. Fourth harmonic for "big" in zero sentences S1-S4; frequencies shown in cycles per second.

The three examples transcribed (impressionistically) as ingliding diphthongs are all about the same length--275 milliseconds. The short Northern form of T.L. is only 138 milliseconds--a very short syllable indeed. All four pronunciations of big show a short rise in pitch for the first 50 milliseconds--about the duration of the b- consonantal transition. This rise in pitch plainly represents the influence of the voiced labial, and is too short to be heard as a vocalic glide. The Northern pronunciation of T.L. shows a short fall from 143 to 135 cps. But the "drawled" Southern forms of W.M. and F.K. fall much further. The second W.M. "big" in S4 rises higher and falls further than the first. Impressionistically, it is heard as a longer syllable, though in fact it is not: undoubtedly it is this steeper intonation contour which is responsible for the effect.

These long, "drawled" vowels are heard in big for W.M. and F.K., and in the word in, for W.M. Figure 4-14 shows the movement of formant positions for these vowels as shown on spectrographs. For W.M. and F.K., these vowels start higher than the simple monophthong of it, which is shown for comparison. In the case of big, the vowel glides upward toward the [i] position; the one which is heard is the highest vowel, that of W.M. in S4, aims most directly at the high front corner.

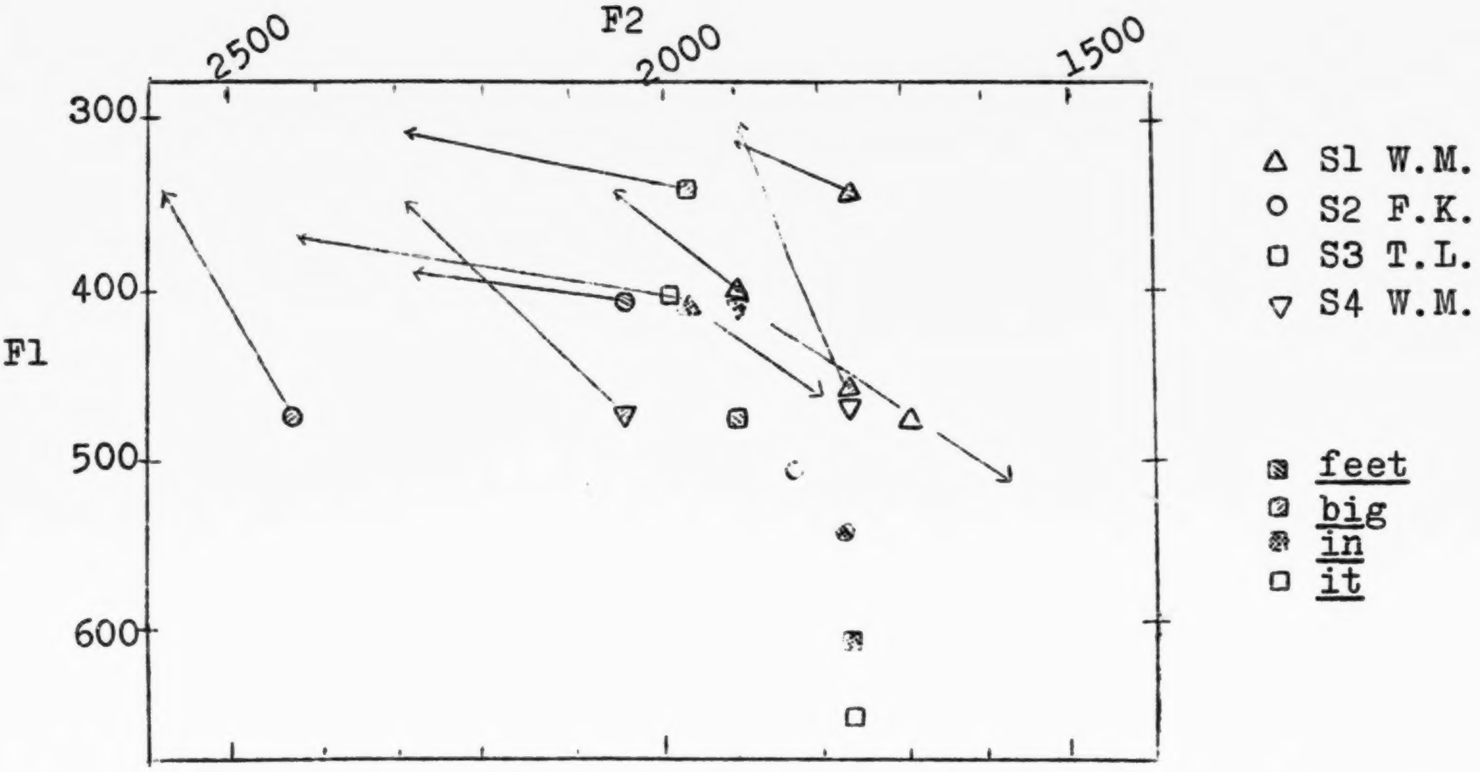


Fig. 4-14. Two-formant positions for high-front vowels in zero sentences S1-S4

When we compare big to feet, it is apparent that F.K.'s big is quite different--much more central than his /iy/--while W.M.'s vowel in big is not very different from his /iy/ in feet. Note that both glides of in for W.M. move in the opposite direction--they are definitely ingliding. However, the length and intonation contour of both vowels clearly mark them as examples of the drawl which is the most prominent Southernism in the zero sentences.

The intonation contours used by the three speakers are quite different. In the first two clauses, W.M. rises to the third pitch level on the first stress, and holds this until he comes to the final stress, where he falls slowly to the second level and holds steady:

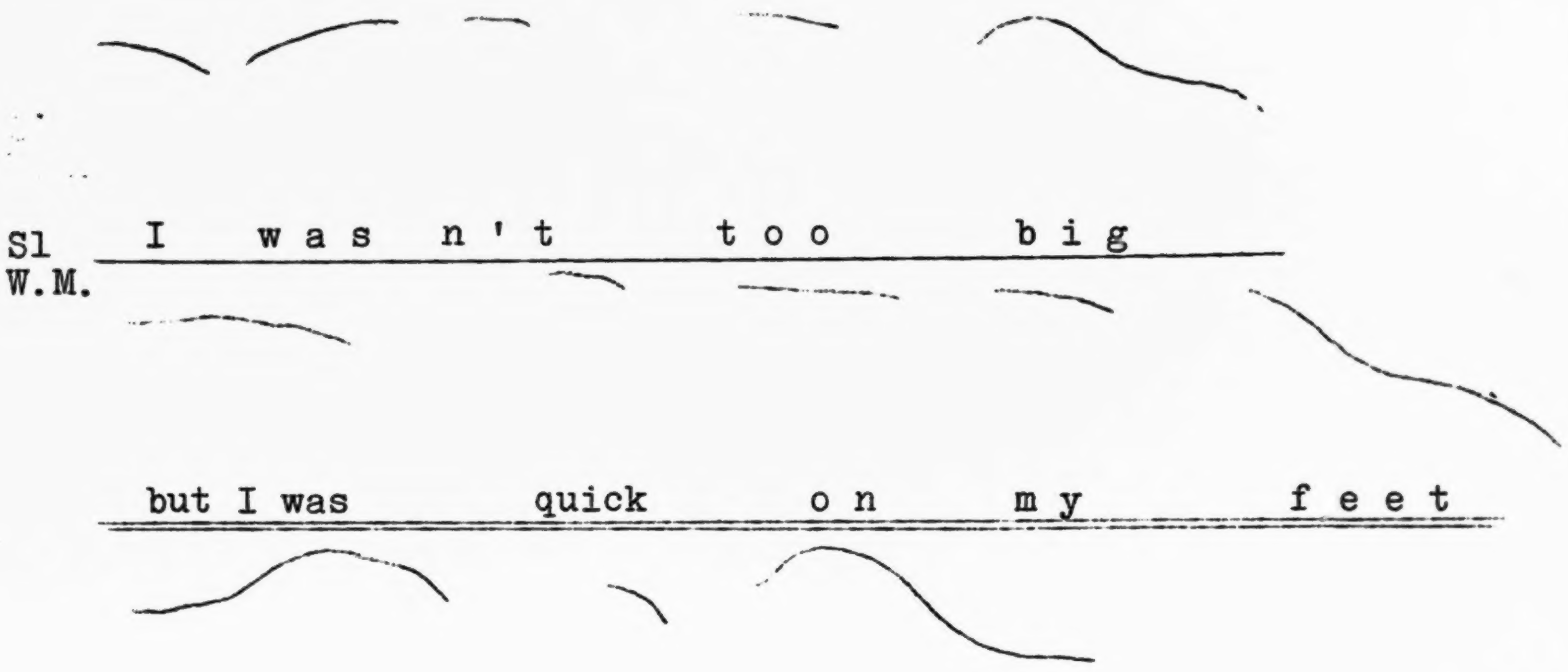
W.M., S1 and S4:

$3\frac{\rightarrow}{2\rightarrow}$I wasn't too bi$_{\text{ig...but I was}}$quick on my fe$_{\text{et...2}}$^{3}

This contour was obtained by a purely impressionistic transcription. Instrumental confirmation may be found on Figure 4-15, which shows the fourth harmonic of the spectrogram made from the test tape: it corresponds quite closely to the pattern shown above. The other examples given below are also shown as transcribed prior to spectrographic analysis, and may be checked on Figure 4-15. On the other hand, F.K. returns to the second level after the first stress, and does not rise to the third level until the final stress:

F.K., S2:

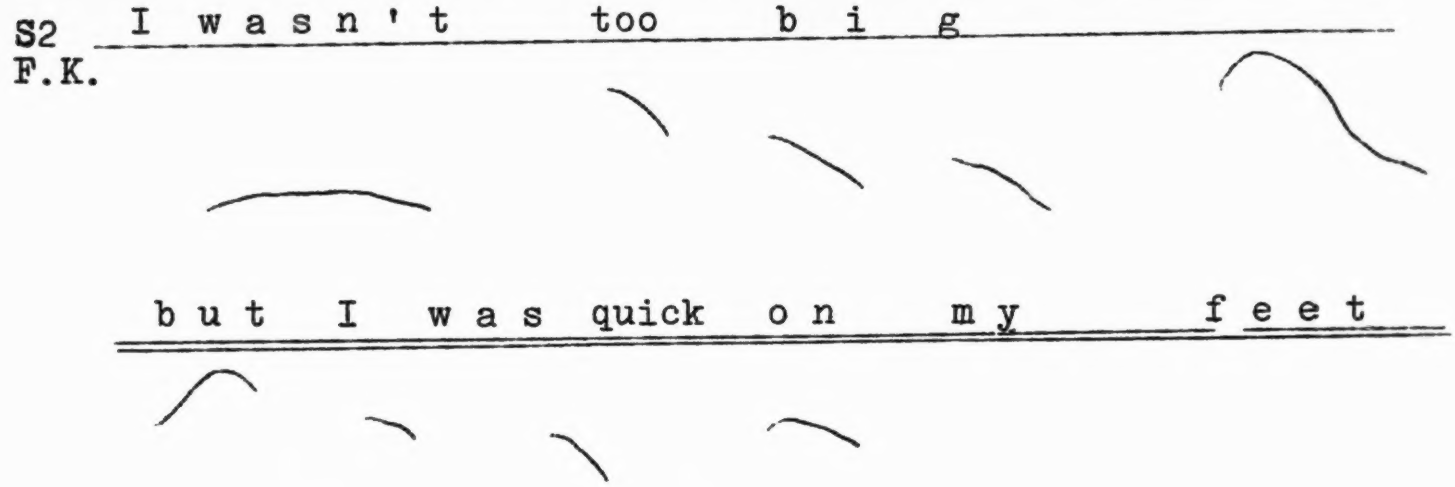
$3\frac{\rightarrow}{2\rightarrow}$I $^{\text{was}}$n't too $^{\text{bi}}$g... but I was $^{\text{quick}}$ on my $^{\text{fe}}$et...



S1
W.M.

I wasn't too big

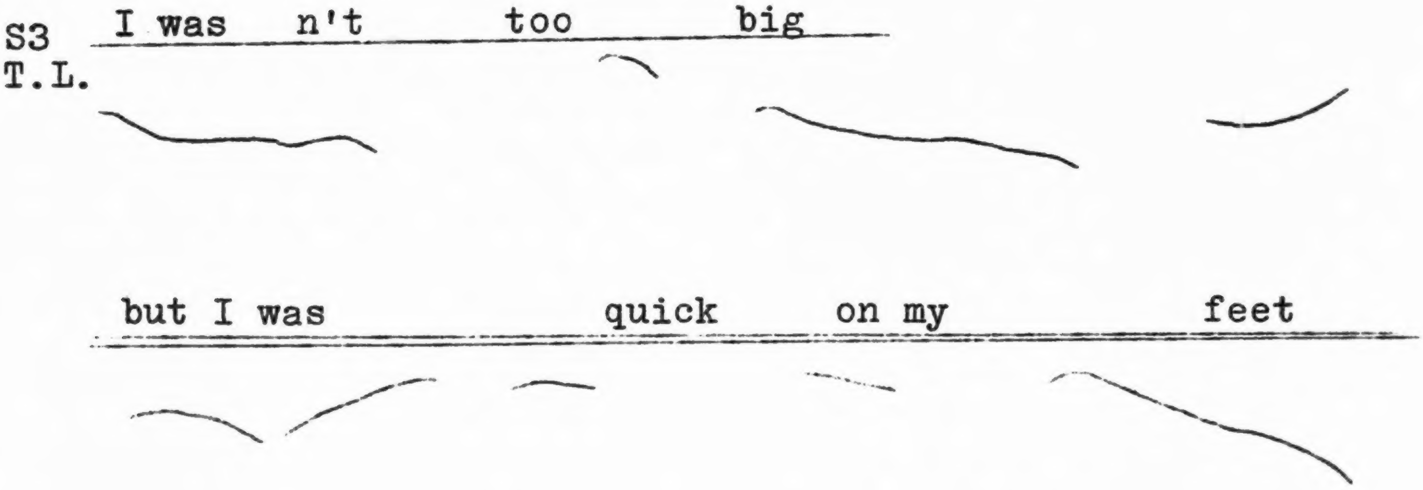
but I was quick on my feet



S2
F.K.

I wasn't too big

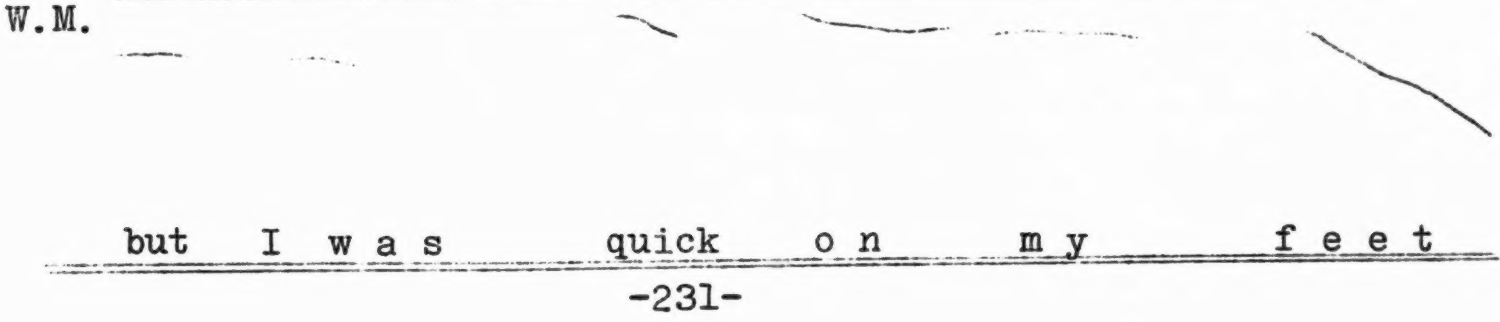
but I was quick on my feet



S3
T.L.

I wasn't too big

but I was quick on my feet



S4
W.M.

I wasn't too big

but I was quick on my feet

We do not know enough about intonation to assign any definite dialect status to this pattern, but it can be noted that both F.K. and W.M. use a contour which gives prominence to the slowly falling pitch on the final stressed vowel. On the other hand, T.L.'s pattern is quite the reverse in this respect; his contour is "concave" in comparison to the "convex" one of the others.

T.L., S3:

I wasn't too big, quick feet
but I was on my

The final stressed vowels are relatively short and sharp, and maintain a steady, non-final contour.

When we examine the intonation contour of the second two clauses of this complex sentence, we find W.M. using a relatively high (third?) pitch level three times, and again giving prominence to the falling glide on the "short" vowel of in:

W.M, S1 and S4:

3→ 2→ 1→ an' my jump shot used to drop i in when it count
ed.

F.K. uses only two main stresses and avoids the "drawl" on the word in:

F.K., S2:

3→ 2→ 1→ an' my jump shot used to drop in when it count
ed.

In the last two clauses, T.L. goes even further in the direction of leveling out the intonation contour. The only prominent rise is on jump, and even the last stressed vowel is kept at the second pitch level without the slightest rise.

T.L., S3:

3→ 2→ 1→ an' my jump shot used to drop in when it count
ed.

A strikingly "business-like" impression is derived from this tactic, which may be responsible for some of the differential reaction to F.K. and T.L.

When we turn to the segmental phonological features of these four sentences, we find variation along the Northern-Southern axis which seems to correspond to "middle class" vs. "working class" values in the results of the SR tests to be given below. In the words I and my, W.M. uses a simple monophthong [ɑ] in S1 and S4 without any trace of upglide. F.K. uses a diphthong, [a·$^{\mathrm{I}}$]; the glide is not as pronounced and does not reach as high as that of T.L.'s in S3, which may be written [a^{1}] by contrast. The spectrographic record confirms the fact that W.M. uses monophthongs without any trace of upglide. Figure 4-16 shows the two instances of my for all four zero sentences: the arrows attached to the vowels spoken by T.L. and F.K. show the directions of the off-glides, while W.M. shows only simple vowels in these words.

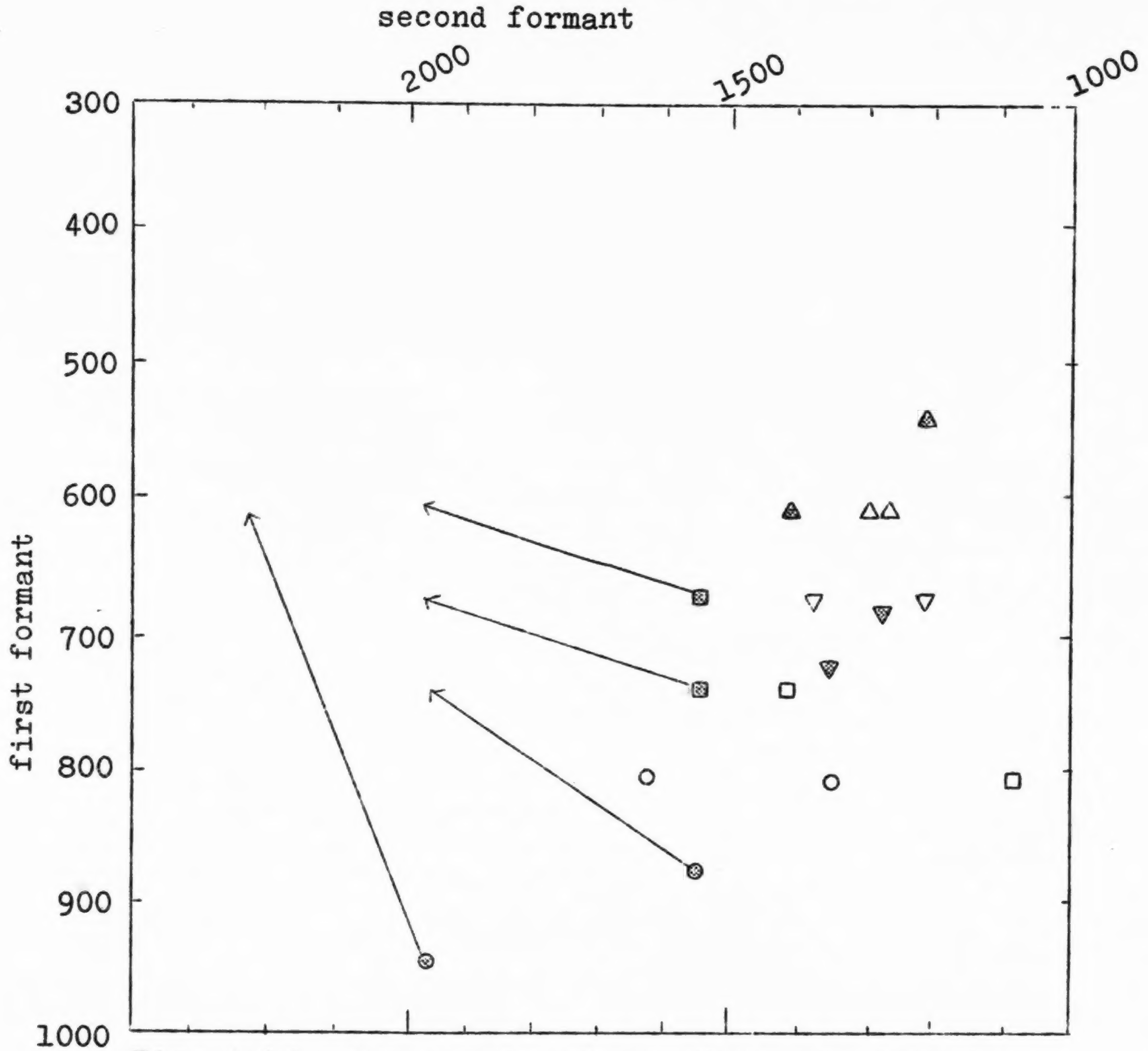


Fig. 4-16. Low vowels of my, shot and drop in four zero sentences of SR Test.

△ S1, W.M.
○ S2, F.K.
▢ S3, T.L.
▽ S4, W.M.

▨ my feet, my jump
□ shot, drop

The formant positions of the low center vowels in *drop* and *shot* are shown for comparison. W.M.'s vowels in *my* cluster quite close to these; in S1 all four vowels are somewhat higher than in his more Southern style of S4. On the other hand, the nucleus of the diphthong /ay/ for T.L. and F.K. are further front. F.K.'s entire vowel system is somewhat skewed from that of the others: in that his formant positions are further front and lower. The high front diphthong of *feet* and the short unstressed *i* of *it* are shown for comparison. Thus F.K.'s *my* is in roughly the same position, relative to his *feet*, as the *my* of T.L. But the offglides of F.K. are much more diffuse and more difficult to trace than those of T.L., ~~as indicated by the dotted line of the arrow~~.

There are a number of differences in consonant articulation. In the treatment of the sequence *wasn't too*..., F.K. plainly has two *t*'s. The consonant is formed for *wasn't*, held for 50 milliseconds, and then released with some aspiration as the initial *t*- of *too*. Neither W.M. nor T.L. do this; T.L. differs from W.M. in having much stronger aspiration on the *t*.

T.L.--the most middle-class, Northern speaker--generally shows more aspiration than the others. The final -*t* in *feet* is unreleased for both W.M. and F.K., but is clearly released by T.L. He also releases the final -*d* in *counted*, while the others do not.

Finally, we may note that the pre-consonantal -*t*'s in *shot used to* and *it counted* allows considerable margin for differentiation in the zero sentences. These are clearly articulated by T.L., who holds the -t in *shot* for a good 50 milliseconds before he begins the [j] *of used to*. He also makes the -*t k*- transition of *it counted* with great precision: there is a weak but distinct release for the [t], a clean silence for 40 milliseconds, and then the burst of the aspirated [k]. On the other hand, W.M. does not form a stop in either case in S1 or S4. In *shot used to* there is clear formant movement toward the -*t* position, indicating that the tip of the tongue is being raised, but it is not complete and voicing is never interrupted entirely. In *it counted* we have a clear glottal stop with no tongue movement. F.K.'s pattern is similar to W.M.'s in the first case, but he forms an unreleased -*t* in the second.

T.L. also uses one prominent mark of the New York City dialect: [nt'] in *counted*. Both W.M. and F.K. use a single nasal flap [n] but in S3, T.L. uses a clear sequence of nasal and weakly aspirated [t'].

Two other Southernisms in the vowel system of W.M. may be mentioned here. The unrounded vowel of *wasn't* is further back for W.M. than for F.K. or T.L., and the vowel of *on* is the back rounded open *o*--[ɔ^n]. Both F.K. and T.L. use a more central form of *wasn't* and the Northern pronunciation of *on* with a low unrounded vowel [ɑn]. These vowel positions are shown below on Figure 4-17.

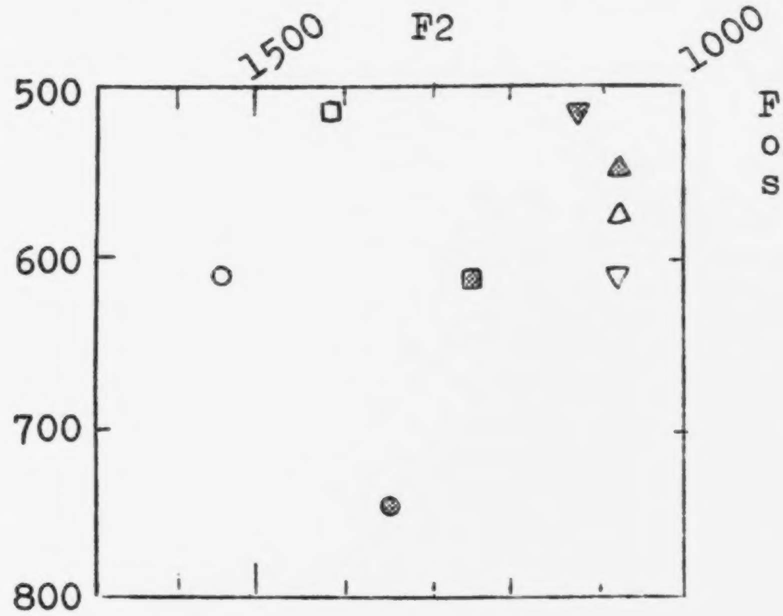


Fig. 4-17. Low back vowels of *wasn't* and *on* in zero sentences of SR Test.

We can sum up the impressions derived from these four sentences by saying that S1 shows a deep, masculine voice with slightly Southern phonology and intonation, and laxly articulated apical consonants. S2 contrasts with S1 in that the voice quality is much lighter, with less voicing, with some features of Southern intonation and somewhat more careful articulation. S3 shows relatively terse, clipped speech with no Southern features at all, and several markers of New York City phonology. Finally, S4 repeats the pattern of S1, with more emphasis on the Southern intonation contour or "drawl" in the first clause.

Responses to the zero section. Tables 4-9, 4-10 and 4-11 show adult responses to the SR tests on the Job, Fight and Friend scales respectively. The data are given as a set of comparisons between ratings given to pairs of sentences, illustrating the oppositions given at the top of the column. The first figure in each set of three gives the number of responses in which the first of the two sentences was given a higher rating than the second; the middle figure the number of responses in which the ratings were equal; and the third figure the number in which the second sentence was rated higher than the first. Thus the first triad in the first column compares ratings given to S1 and S2, contrasting working class (WC) and middle class (MC) speech patterns: all fourteen responses rated S2 higher than S1 on the Job scale. **In all cases, the left hand alternant is the prestige variant.**

TABLE 4-9
RESPONSES TO THE SR TEST ON THE JOB SCALE

			Variable			
			MC~WC	(th)	(r)	(st)
Social class		n	S2~1	S5~8	S9~6	S7~10
Middle Class	(No.)	14	14/0/0	14/0/0	12/1/1	10/1/3
	(So.)	1	1/0/0	1/0/0	1/0/0	1/0/0
Upper Working	(No.)	16	15/0/1	15/0/1	11/2/3	11/2/3
	(So.)	29	27/1/1	24/4/1	16/1/12	20/4/5
Lower Working	(No.)	8	7/0/1	7/0/1	7/1/0	5/2/1
	(So.)	16	13/1/2	15/0/1	8/6/2	11/1/4
Puerto Ricans		6	6/0/0	4/2/0	2/1/3	2/3/1

TABLE 4-10
RESPONSES TO THE SR TEST ON THE FIGHT SCALE

			Variable			
			MC~WC	(th)	(r)	(st)
Social class		n	S2~1	S5~8	S9~6	S7~10
Middle Class	(No.)	11	2/0/9	6/3/2	2/1/8	2/6/3
	(So.)	1	0/0/1	0/0/1	0/0/1	0/1/0
Upper Working	(No.)	16	6/0/10	5/4/7	4/3/9	7/4/5
	(So.)	26	9/1/16	12/5/9	10/5/11	12/2/12
Lower Working	(No.)	8	2/1/5	3/4/1	1/4/3	2/4/2
	(So.)	16	9/0/7	6/5/5	5/2/9	4/3/8
Puerto Ricans		6	3/0/3	4/1/1	2/0/4	1/1/4

TABLE 4-11
RESPONSES TO THE SR TEST ON THE FRIENDSHIP SCALE

			Variable			
			MC~WC	(th)	(r)	(st)
Social class		n	S2~1	S5~8	S9~6	S7~10
Middle Class	(No.)	9	8/0/1	9/0/0	7/1/1	5/3/1
Upper Working	(No.)	14	9/2/3	6/7/0	7/4/3	5/7/2
	(So.)	25	18/2/5	21/4/0	12/7/6	13/5/7
Lower Working	(No.)	8	2/2/4	3/4/1	1/4/3	1/5/2
	(So.)	15	9/1/5	11/2/2	5/4/6	5/5/4
Puerto Ricans		6	4/0/2	2/3/1	3/0/3	2/1/3

The differential ratings of S1 and S2 show the solid agreement we have come to expect from speech communities on subjective reaction tests. All social groups agree in their preference for the middle-class speech pattern of F.K. and T.L. over W.M. Here we are not concerned with the particular features which listeners react to, but merely with the fact that they have the capacity to recognize the characteristics of an educated, middle-class speaker as against those of a less educated, working-class speaker, and furthermore to recognize the meaning of this difference in terms of the middle-class criterion of job-suitability. The fact that speakers can so react to "zero" sentences shows that the matched guise technique is essential: if we had different speakers using different values of our phonological variables, we would not know what contribution a particular variable was making.[10]

We also find that the middle class speakers are more consistent than the working class groups in these ratings. A typical pattern for the Job scale shows:

	S2 vs. S1
Middle class	14/0/0
Upper working class	42/1/2
Lower working class	20/1/3

There is no question that all groups are following the same pattern, but the lower the social class, the less consistent and sensitive are subjects to this norm of job-suitability. This confirms the findings of the SSENYC study, where the highest status group consistently gave the clearest patterns of discriminations on the "zero" pattern of the job scale (Labov 1966:415). But the middle class is also more consistent on the other scales as well:

	S2 vs. S1	
	Fight	Friend
Middle class	2/0/9	8/0/1
Upper working class	15/1/26	27/5/8
Lower working class	11/1/12	11/3/9

In each case, the middle class is the most consistent, and the lower working class the least. There are four possible explanations for this repeated finding. One is that the middle class is a more homogeneous group--or at least has a more homogeneous set of values than the working class group. Or it may be that middle class subjects are more sensitive to speech--are more closely attuned to the differences between one speaker and another. The third possibility is that they are better test-takers in general--that they pay more attention to the data and mark the blanks more carefully. The last possibility is that in the test situation, middle-class values are dominant, and that the fight and friendship scales will reflect middle-class attitudes on these dimensions more than working-class values. Or more generally, one might say that the dominant values in our society as a whole are those of middle-class society, and these are imperfectly grasped by those who are less educated and more distant from the source of these norms. If this is the case, it is fruitless to search for positive working-class values--since all we have is greater or lesser awareness of the single set of values that is dominant in our society. The further exploration of the SR test data will show in particular if this fourth possibility is the case.

Figure 4-18 shows the average numerical ratings for the zero pattern on the three scales.

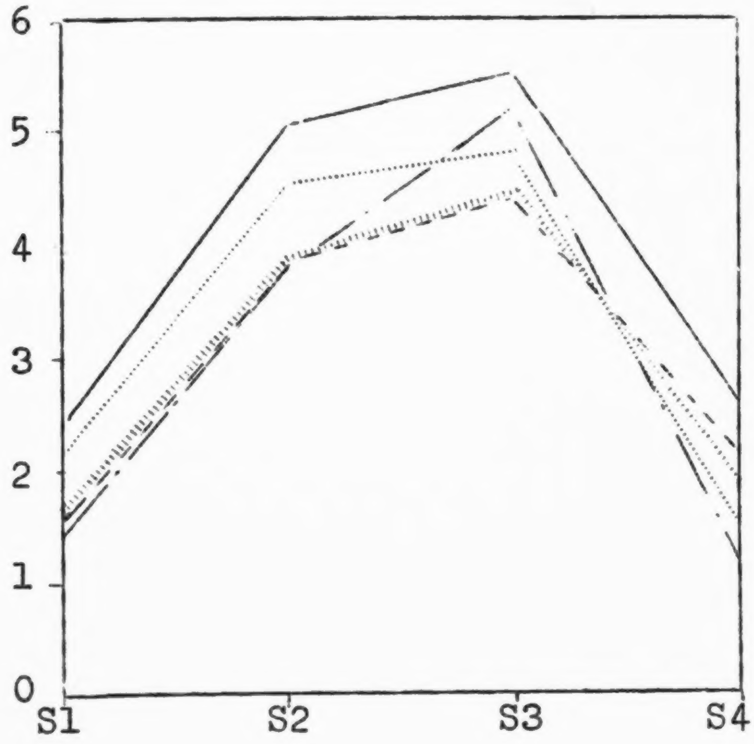


Fig. 4-18a. Average numerical ratings on the Job scale of the SR Test.

The mean ratings given by each social group to the first four sentences are connected, so that each figure shows five lines. Figure 18-a shows average reactions to the Job scale. There is a striking uniformity to this pattern: all social classes seem to agree in giving S2 a higher rating than S1, S3 slightly higher than S2, and S4 about the same rating as S1. The slight increase in Southern style shown by S4 over S1 is not heard as significant by most listeners. The comparison of S1 and S4 will not be pursued further in this analysis, except to note that it offers an excellent control on the (st) variable in sentences of the same speakers (see below). Note that the middle class group gives the highest ratings all along the line, and the other four social groups seem to fit within this envelope. As we have seen, there is somewhat less consistency within the working class groups, and the curve for the Southern LWC at least, is somewhat flatter than for the Middle Class.

The Fight scale is shown in Figure 18-b: judgments made in answer to the question, "If the speaker was in a street fight, what are the chances of his coming out on top?"

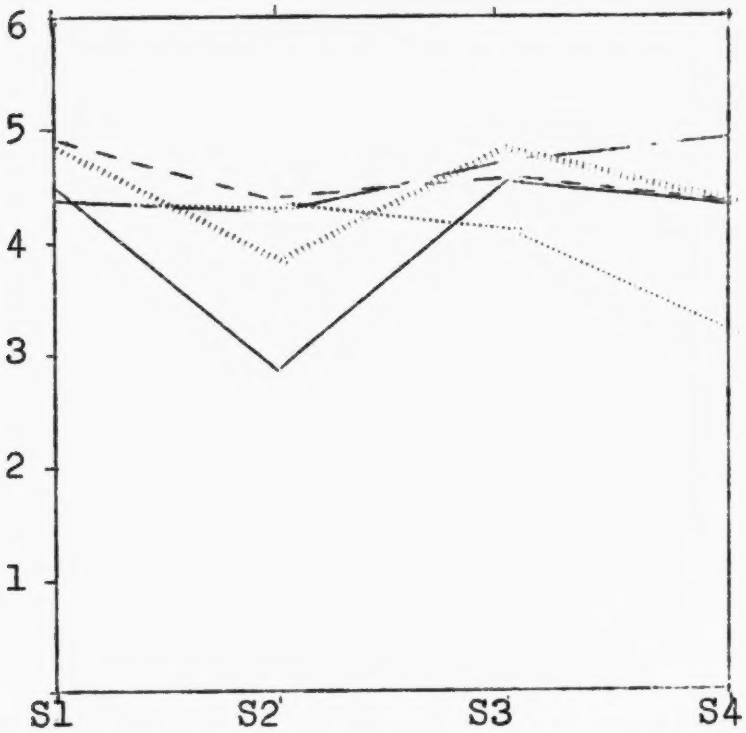


Fig. 4-18b. Average numerical ratings on the Fight scale.

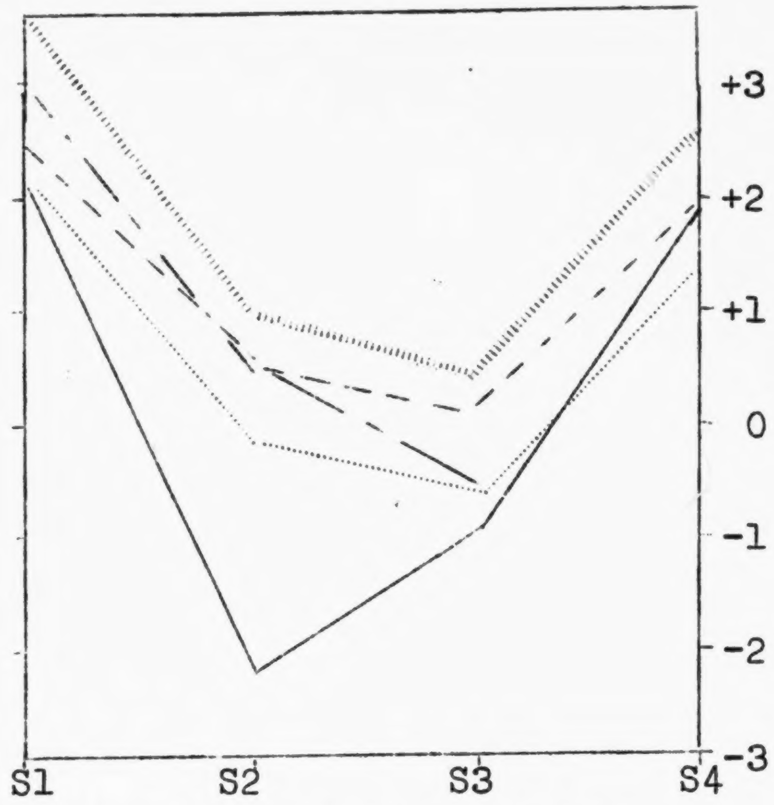


Fig. 4-18c. Differences between the Job scale and the Fight scale.

This is the converse of the Job scale: for all groups, S1 and S4 go up sharply on the Fight scale--S4 somewhat less than S1. For the Middle Class, S1 and S3 go down in the Fight scale. This is partly an artifact of the way in which the scales are constructed, but does show clearly that the Middle Class switches value judgments more abruptly than the other classes. Figure 18-c maps the differences between the Job scale and the Fight scale for all groups: here again, the Middle Class line is the most extreme, and forms the envelope within which the others fit. The Northern LWC shows the largest positive increases, Southern LWC comes closest to the Middle Class line. In outline, Figure 18-c is roughly the mirror image of Figure 18-a of the Job scale, and shows clearly that the value judgments on toughness and fighting ability are indeed the reverse of those on job suitability.

The Friendship scale registers judgments in answer to the question, "If you got to know this person very well, how likely would he be to become a friend of yours?"

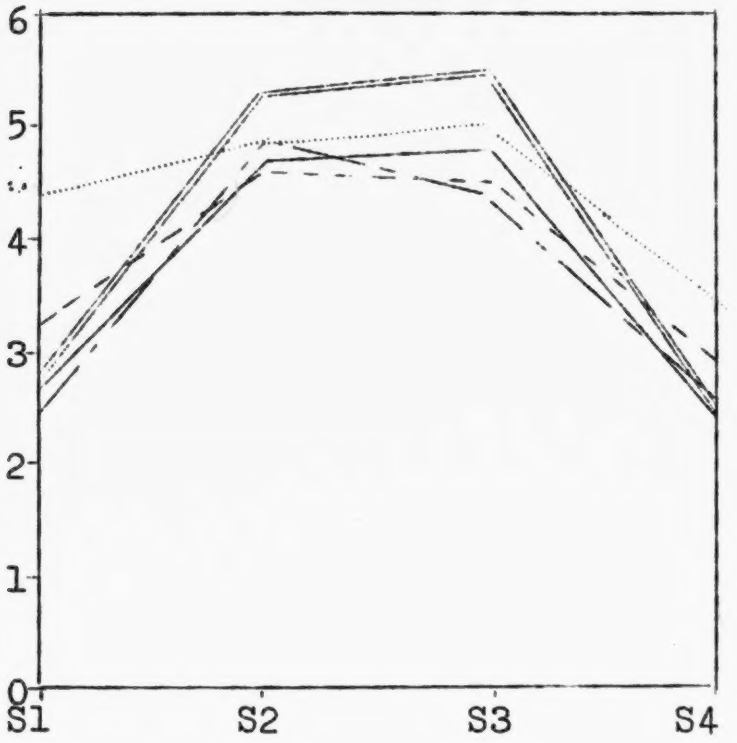


Fig. 4-18d. Average numerical ratings on the Friendship scale for all social class groups but one.

Figure 18-d shows average ratings on the Friendship scale for all of the groups but one. For the Middle Class and the Upper Working Class groups, there is extraordinary agreement here--the Southern LWC is somewhat more diffuse. This pattern plainly copies that of the Job scale of Figure 18-a--the double line added to the Figure 18-d shows the outline of the Middle Class pattern of the Job scale. In other words, most subjects reacted to the Friendship scale in the same way as to the Job scales. They felt that those people who used the higher prestige forms were more apt to become good friends of theirs. The great majority of subjects have thus internalized the middle-class values: these norms have become their own norms; and they think of themselves and their close friends as using them--at least in formal situations. Those who recognize the Middle Class norms in their speech are the kind of people that the subjects would like to be with.

There is one group omitted from Figure 18-d--the Northern Lower Working Class. These are the adults who grew up in Harlem or other ghetto areas, did not graduate from high school, have not founded a stable family, and have not gotten stable, good-paying jobs.[11]

In fact, this is the nearest adult equivalent of the NNE adolescent peer groups which we have been studying in this report. It has been noted several times that the "lower class culture" has a broader base among adolescents than among adults--many members gradually detach themselves from the street culture as they enter adult life. But the group here marked as Northern Lower Working Class represents the continuation of an "earlier Jets and Cobras." As such, their reactions to the SR test are of the greatest interest for us in understanding the value systems which underlie and reinforce the NNE dialect. Figure 4-18e shows the average ratings of the Northern LWC group on the Friendship scale. The upper line is the pattern of the same group on the Fight scale, showing the way in which the Friendship scale is modeled on the Fight scale and not the Job scale. It is clear that this group is reacting to the Friendship scale in exactly the opposite manner to the Middle Class and Upper Working Class groups: for them, the person they are most likely to become friendly with is the one they rate low on the Job scale and high on the Fight scale. This is the first clear indication that there are value systems attached to language which do not copy the dominant middle class pattern--that there are positive values associated with the vernacular which are held by members of the NNE sub-culture and not by those who have left it.

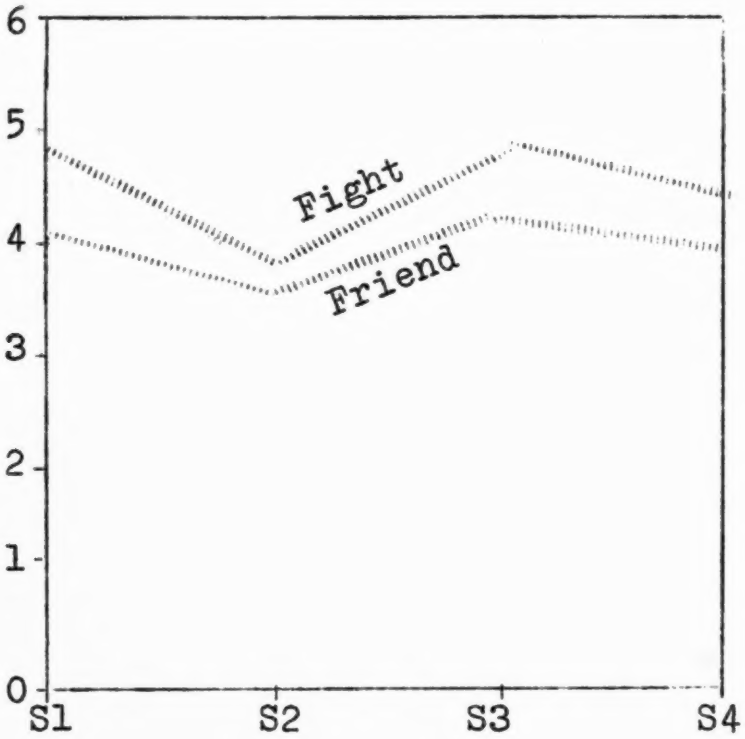


Fig. 4-18e. Average numerical rating of zero sentences on Friendship scale for Lower Working Class (No.)

The most crucial contrast in the zero pattern is plainly that between S1 and S2. The voices of these two speakers recur later in the test with sentences that embody the phonological variables of (st) and (r) respectively. Furthermore, they set up the initial contrast between working-class and middle-class speech which establishes the tone of the whole test. Figure 4-19 shows the percentage of those who rate the prestige patterns of S2 higher than the lower status pattern of S1. The upper line shows the Job scale:

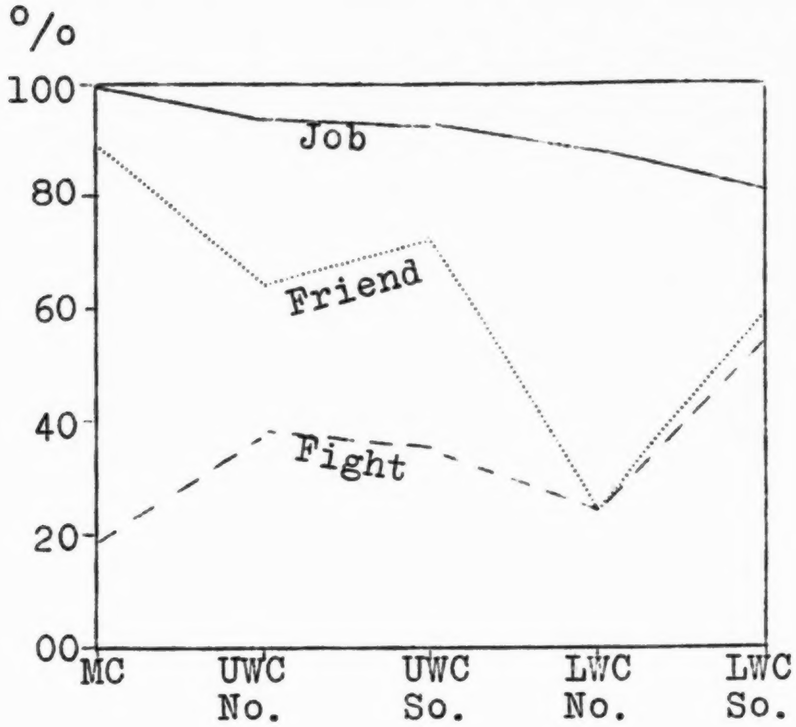


Fig. 4-19. Percent rating S2 higher than S1 on three scales for five social groups.

on this dimension, all five groups of subjects show a great majority choosing S2 over S1. The greatest consistency is shown by the Middle Class, and the least by the Lower Working Class, as shown by the line which slopes from 100°/o to 80°/o. The lower line is the Fight scale, which is plainly the converse of the Job scale. For all but the Southern Lower Working Class, only a small minority chooses S2 over S1. Finally, the intermediate dotted line is the percentage of those who choose S2 over S1 on the Friendship scale. For the Middle Class, this plainly approximates the Job scale. For the Upper Working Class, the Friendship scale lies in between the Job and Fight scales, but leans more towards the Job scale--a majority still choose S2 over S1. Note that these choices also include a number who make S1 and S2 as equal--for the ~~Upper~~ Middle Class there are only 20°/o who choose S1 over S2. When we move to the Lower Working Class, the situation is suddenly reversed. The Friendship line merges with the Fight line. Only one quarter of the Northern Lower Working Class chooses S2 over S1 on the Friendship scale--a full 50°/o picks S1 over S2, and the remaining quarter rates S1 and S2 as equal. This parallel of the Friendship and Fight scales continues with the Lower Working Class group raised in the South, but here the group is about evenly divided, and all three scales are not far apart. In many ways, the Southern LWC seems to represent a group somewhat outside the system we are describing. We will see other indications that their reactions are more diffuse and not as precise as other groups--a finding which parallels the behavior of the Southern Out-of-Town group studied in SSENYC (Labov 1966:647ff.)

The reactions of subjects to the zero pattern provide us with the over-all sociolinguistic structure of normative judgments against which we can measure reaction to the phonological variables. In these comparisons, subjects are reacting to different speakers--W.M., F.K., and T.L. The differences we traced between the two sentences spoken by W.M. were apparently not great enough to make most people shift their judgments--a large number rate S1 and S4 the same, and whatever differences are made do not show any general direction.[12] But the reactions to different speakers were highly selective:

1. All groups agreed in rating the middle class speakers higher on the Job scale--and the Middle Class subjects were most consistent in this respect.

2. The reactions of all groups showed a reversal of S1 and S2 on the Fight scale, and in general showed that some speech values associated with the Job scale are the converse of those associated with the Fight scale. It should be noted, however, that T.L. was rated relatively high on both scales, so that not all prestige patterns are reversed in the same way.

3. The pattern of reactions to the Friendship scale matched those of the Job scale for the Middle Class and Upper Working Class, but for the Lower Working Class, especially those raised in the North, the Friendship scale runs parallel to the Fight scale. Thus we can infer that those closest to the NNE sub-culture place a positive value on the speech characteristic of working class men. If there is a value that we may call self-identification, it is plainly registered here. It remains to be seen if these reactions are simply to the voice quality and style of articulation of the working-class speaker, or whether they are also directed to the particular linguistic variables we have been studying. In the next sub-section, we will consider differential reactions to the same speaker using different values of these variables.

4.6.6. The phonological variables.

The first of the phonological variables is (th), which occurs in its high prestige form in S5, and in the stigmatized form as S8. The speaker is A.M., who does not appear in the zero pattern. He is a Negro middle class man, with a Master's Degree, a teacher in a New York City School. He has a strong voice, not quite as deep as W.M. In S5, he pronounces all of the th sounds, both voiced and voiceless, as fricatives: in S8 the same sounds are all stops, as shown in the phonetic transcriptions below.

If it wasn't this thing, it was that thing

S5 ^{2}ɪf ɪ^{tʔ} ˋwʌznt ^{2}ðɪ́s ^{2}θɨɪ̃̂ŋ→ ^{2}ɪ̀t wəz ^{3}ðǽt ^{2}θɪ̃̂:ŋ→

S8 ˈɪf ɪ wʌzn ^{3}dɪ́s ^{2}tɪ̂:ŋ→ ɪt wəz̥ ^{2}dát ^{2}tɪ̂·ŋ→

or the other thing.

S5 ˎɔr ð̌ij ^{2}ʌ́ðə ˈθɪ·ŋ↘

S8 ɔr ˋdij ʌ^{d}ə ^{2}tɪ̂·ŋ↘

The intonation contours of these two sentences are very similar. In both, the r in or is pronounced, and the r in other is not. The pauses vary somewhat, but there is no consistent difference of the type found between S1 and S4. The overwhelming difference between the two sentences is in the values of (th). Unfortunately, the difference is somewhat too great. We did not succeed in finding any Negro man with a natural range of stylistic variation which included consistent fricatives for this, that, the, thing and other in one style, and a good percentage of lenis stops and affricates in the other. Of the many speakers tested, those who used many stops in their casual style did not produce clean, clearly identifiable fricatives in their careful speech. We therefore asked A.M. to make this difference deliberately, and the result is the stops in the first two clauses are articulated somewhat too strongly. They are equivalent to emphatic d and t. The spectrographic record does not show the t's to be aspirated, but they are plainly quite emphatic. Only the th sounds in the last clause have the softly articulated, lenis quality that we would have preferred. The (th) contrast here is somewhat stronger than the contrast usually heard in every-day life, and it therefore comes to the attention of the listener as a fully stereotyped dis, dat, ting as recorded in dialect literature.[13] We therefore used S5 and S8 as the most obvious case of a socially stigmatized pronunciation. Anyone who did not respond selectively to the contrast of S5 and S8 was either not paying attention, or was outside the most overt speech norm of the community. But because S8 departed from the most realistic pattern of speech heard by subjects, responses on the Fight and Friendship scales were not as strong as for other variables.

The second variable encountered by the listener is (r).

In S6, F.K. uses the lower prestige variant of r-less speech and in S9 he speaks the same passage with full r-pronunciation. Both of these styles are quite natural to F.K., and he does a consistent job. The differences between the two versions of (r) are shown below in phonetic transcription.

Look Eleanor: everybody can't be a star. I'm not a for-

S6 ^{3}lʊk ^{2}ɛ̂lɨnɔ ↗ ^{3}ɛ́vri^{2}bɑdi ^{2}k'æ̃t ^{1}biə...ɜ·^{2}tɑ́·↗ · ^{2}ɑmn̤ɑt ə ^{2}fɔ̀·

S9 ^{3}lʊk ^{2}ɛ̂lɪnɔ̀r↗ ^{3}ɛvri^{2}bɑ^di k'æ̃t ^{1}biʲə ^{2}stɑ̂r↗ ^{2}ɑ̀ɪmnɑd̥ə ^{2}fɔ́ʳ

ward; I'm not a center; I'm a guard. I play the back court.

S6 ^{3}wəd↗ ^{2}ɑ̀m ^{2}nɑ̀t ə ^{2}sɪ·n̩ə ^{3}↗ ^{3}ɑ́m ^{2}ə ^{3}gɑ́ :d ^{3}ɑ ^{2}pl̥êd̥ə ^{3}bǽk^{2}kɔ̀··t↘

S9 ^{3}wɚd̥↗ ^{2}àᴵm nɑ̀d̥ə ^{2}sí·n̩ɚ↗ ^{3}áᴵm ə ^{2}gɑ́ɚd' ^{2}aⁱpl̥è ðə ^{3}bǽkkɔ̀·ɚt>

The (r) passages have seven instances of final pre-consonantal /r/ in Eleanor, star, forward, center, guard and court. Three of these are in final position with primary stress, so that the character of the r-pronunciation in this passage creates a very strong effect indeed. In S6, F.K. uses no constricted [r]: guard, star and court have long monophthongs. In S9, all of the r's are pronounced: the first [r] in forward shows only moderate constriction, but all the rest are strong and unmistakeable [r]'s. In fact, the constriction is maintained throughout the vowel, so that we have a thoroughly retroflex, mid-western "r".[14]

There are a number of minor contrasts between S6 and S9 which should be pointed out. There are four examples of I'm, and in S6 these are all simple monophthongs; in S9 two show some evidence of upglide, and two are clear diphthongs. The word the is a lenis flap in S6, and a fricative in S9, though both are quite obscure. The first vowel in everybody is a little higher in S6. In S6 the word Eleanor has the Southern pronunciation with a completely unstressed last syllable, while S9 shows the tertiary stress on -nor. There are a few hesitations and longer pauses in S6, and a softer, somewhat breathier voice quality.

The stress and intonation patterns of S6 and S9 are generally quite similar, although there are a few differences which mark S9 as being more carefully articulated. Impressionistically, one can say that S9 sounds a bit fussy, while S6 seems to be aiming at a 'cool' effect. All of these smaller differences associate Southernisms with S6 and a Northern, more neutral pronunciation with S9. They form the natural syndrome characteristic of F.K.'s somewhat mannered "vernacular".[15] At the same time, it should be pointed out that many of these minor Southernisms were found in F.K.'s zero sentence S2, but they did not produce radically different reactions in listeners as compared to T.L. who showed none of them. The dominant differences between S6 and S9 are the six pronunciations of (r), and this is what comes immediately to the attention of those who are used to noting dialect features.

The third variable is (st), which involves a number of consonant clusters in S7 and S10. These are spoken by W.M., the working class man first heard in S1 and S4. A phonetic transcript of the two sentences is given below.

You must have passed it to Lester sixty times,

S7 ^{3}jú˂ ^{2}mʌ̀stə ^{2}p‘έ·stɪd̥ə ^{2}lέstə ^{2} ^{3}sɪ́ksti t‘^{3}á:mz^{2} →

S10 ^{2}ju ^{3}mʌ̂stə ^{3}p‘έ·sɪd̥ə ^{3}lέst^{2}ə ^{3}sɪ́ksti^{3} t‘^{3}a:m^{2}

and he missed it most of the time.

S7 ^{1}æ̃ˀni ^{3}mɪ́st^{2}ɪt^{1} ^{3}mɔ́stəd̥ ^{3}t‘à:m^{1} ↘

S10 ^{2}æ̀ni^{2} ^{3}mɪ́s^{2}ɪt ^{3}mɔ́səd̥ə t à:m ↘

There are six examples of -st consonant clusters in this sentence: monomorphemic in must, six, most and Lester; past tense clusters in passed and missed. The word-internal cluster of Lester and sixty is never simplified, but must and most frequently show deletion of the final -t (3.2). In addition, there is an -mz plural cluster in times which is rarely simplified. In S7, W.M. pronounces all of these clusters, but in S10 he deletes the -t in passed, missed, most, and the -z in times.

The sentence chosen here from "Nobody Knows Your Name" was that which contains -st clusters before vowels. All of the examples of -st in this sentence occur before vowels (except sixty), and are therefore less often deleted and more easily noticed (3.2). The past tense clusters before vowels are the least often simplified of any -st clusters. The plural cluster is rarely simplified by dropping the -z. Therefore the four clusters simplified in S10 should have the maximum impact for listeners.

There are very few other differences between these two sentences. S7 begins with a stress on you, and the pitch falls more rapidly at the end of S10. But such slight differences do not point in any one direction. The significant dialect characteristics are constant: the lenis flap in the; the sustained high pitch on sixty times; the raised tense vowel of pass; and the slow falling contour on monophthongal time. S7 and S10 therefore give us the best controlled comparison between standard and non-standard values of a variable. But we can expect the weakest effect from (st), since it is not usually subject to overt social stigma like (th). Our three variables therefore give us three different types: [1] a highly stigmatized phonetic feature (th); [2] a recent prestige feature of the sound pattern (r); [3] a feature at the intersection of grammar and phonology which is not heavily stigmatized, (st).

The following discussion of the results of the phonological variables will concentrate upon differential reactions to these pairs of sentences, rather than average ratings on an absolute scale. The datum in each case will be whether the higher status member of each pair was rated higher on the scale than the lower status member, or rated equal to it, or rated lower. The comparison of S2 vs. S1 which we have examined above will be used throughout as a standard against which the consistency of these differential reactions may be measured. The "higher" and "lower" status members of each pair are obvious, but it may be useful to set them out explicitly:

Variable	Higher status	Lower status
MC~WC	S2	S1
(th)	S5, +(th)	S8, -(th)
(r)	S9, +(r)	S6, -(r)
(st)	S7, +(st)	S10, -(st)

Reactions to the phonological variables The first observation that can be made about the three phonological variables is that subjects react to them in the same way as to differences between speakers in the zero pattern. Figure 4-20a shows the percentage of those rating the high-status pattern higher than the low-status item on the Job scale. The three phonological variables are shown alongside the MC~WC opposition of S2 vs. S1. The patterns are generally the same for all five sub-groups. MC~WC and (th) produce the most consistent reactions, while only about 3/4 of all groups select S7 over S10 for (st). The (r) variable shows considerable variation, ranging from between 60 and 80 per cent. Note that the two Southern groups are sharply differentiated from the Northern groups. Only about 50 per cent of the Southern subjects choose the [r] value on the job scale. This follows from the fact that when most of these Southern subjects were growing up, r-less pronunciation was the prestige pattern in the coastal South,

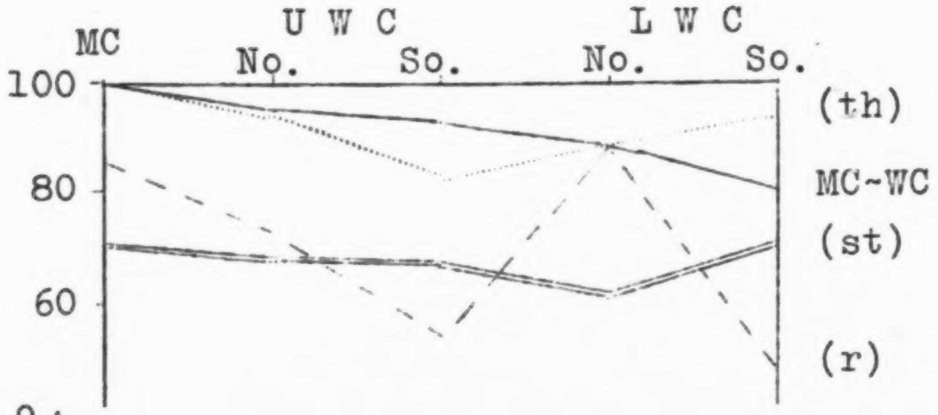


Fig. 4-20a. Percent choosing prestige variant on Job scale for four variables.

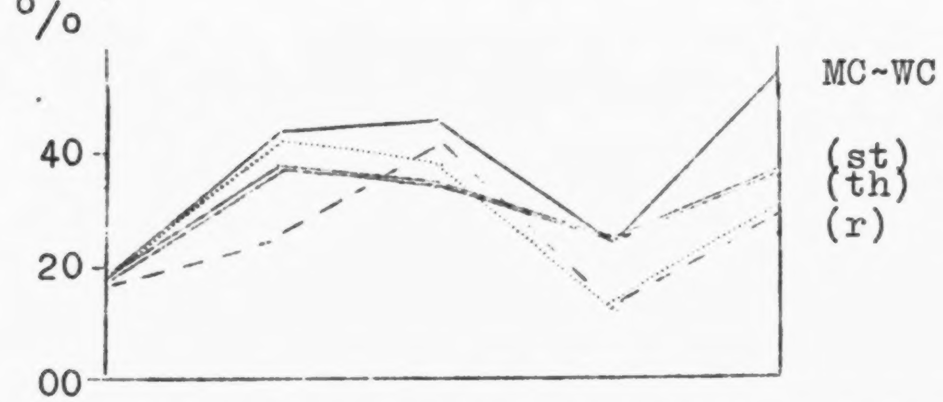


Fig. 4-20b. Percent choosing prestige variant on Fight scale for four variables.

and it is only recently that the r-pronunciation of the mass media has begun to be felt as the prestige norm.

Figure 4-20b shows the comparable pattern for the Fight scale. Here we see all three phonological variables reversed, just as in the case of the zero pattern. No more than 20 to 40 percent of the subjects selected the speaker of the higher-status pattern as more likely to win in a fight than the speaker of the low-status pattern. The four items charted here cluster even more tightly than on the Job scale.

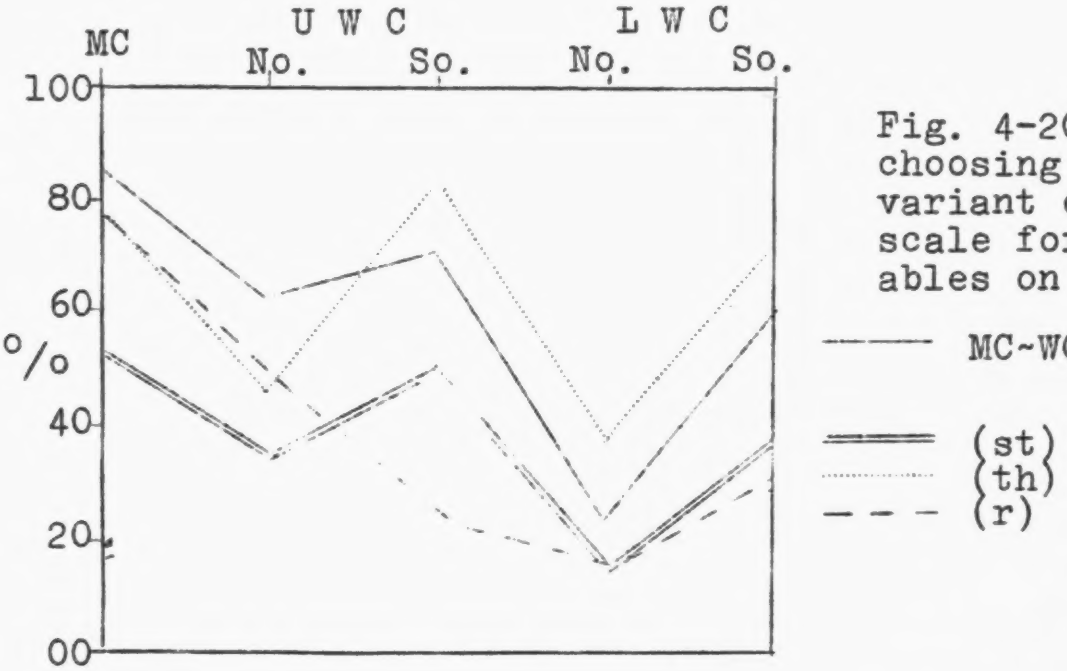


Fig. 4-20c. Percent choosing prestige variant on the Friend scale for four variables on the SR Test.

Finally, the pattern for the Friendship scale is seen in Figure 20-c, which shows the percentage of those who rate the use of the high-status pattern higher on the Friend scale than speakers of the low-status pattern. This ranges from one end of the vertical axis to the other, and there is much more spread between the variables. Note however that all of the variables charted here follow the same general path, and that the two prominent extremes tell us that the directions of the zero pattern are preserved for all variables. The middle class shows the highest percentage of those who select the high-status pattern on the Friend scale for all variables, and the Northern Lower Working Class group is by far the lowest for all variables. In fact, this effect is even more marked for (r) and (st) than it was for S2 vs. S1.

For a more complete view of reactions to this test, it is necessary to view the percentage of those who reverse the selections noted above, as well as those who rate both sentences as equal. It must not be forgotten that an accurate judgment of S6 vs. S9, or S7 vs. S10 might well be to rate the two as equal, since the same person is speaking. None of the subjects are able to identify for sure a given speaker with another who had been heard before, although many are aware in general that the same speakers do recur. To repeat a previous rating deliberately would require identifying speaker S10 with that of S7, and remembering what rating had been given to S7. We do not find subjects re-examining their charts to see how they had rated a particular speaker beforehand. Therefore if S7 is marked as equal to S10 it is the result of the same stimuli adding up to the same reaction. A blind marking of the forms by chance would produce only about 12 per cent same ratings for any two sentences, with the rest distributed equally to one side or the other.

Figure 4-21 (next page) displays the complete information on the MC~WC opposition of S2 vs. S1, and the three phonological variables for all five groups of the sample population. Two lines divide each sub-diagram into three sections: "U" indicates the percentage of those who give higher ratings to the higher status form; "E" the percentage of those who rated the two forms at the same level; and the lowest section, "L", the percentage of those who rated the lower status items higher. The shaded portion in the center of each sub-diagram then indicates those for whom the variable being tested did not make any difference. When the "E" section is around 10 to 20 per cent of the total, it may well be the result of chance. But when it rises to 50 per cent, it must certainly be read more carefully. The twelve sub-diagrams of Figure 4-21 are arranged so that the columns show responses on the same scale, and the horizontal rows the record of each social sub-group.

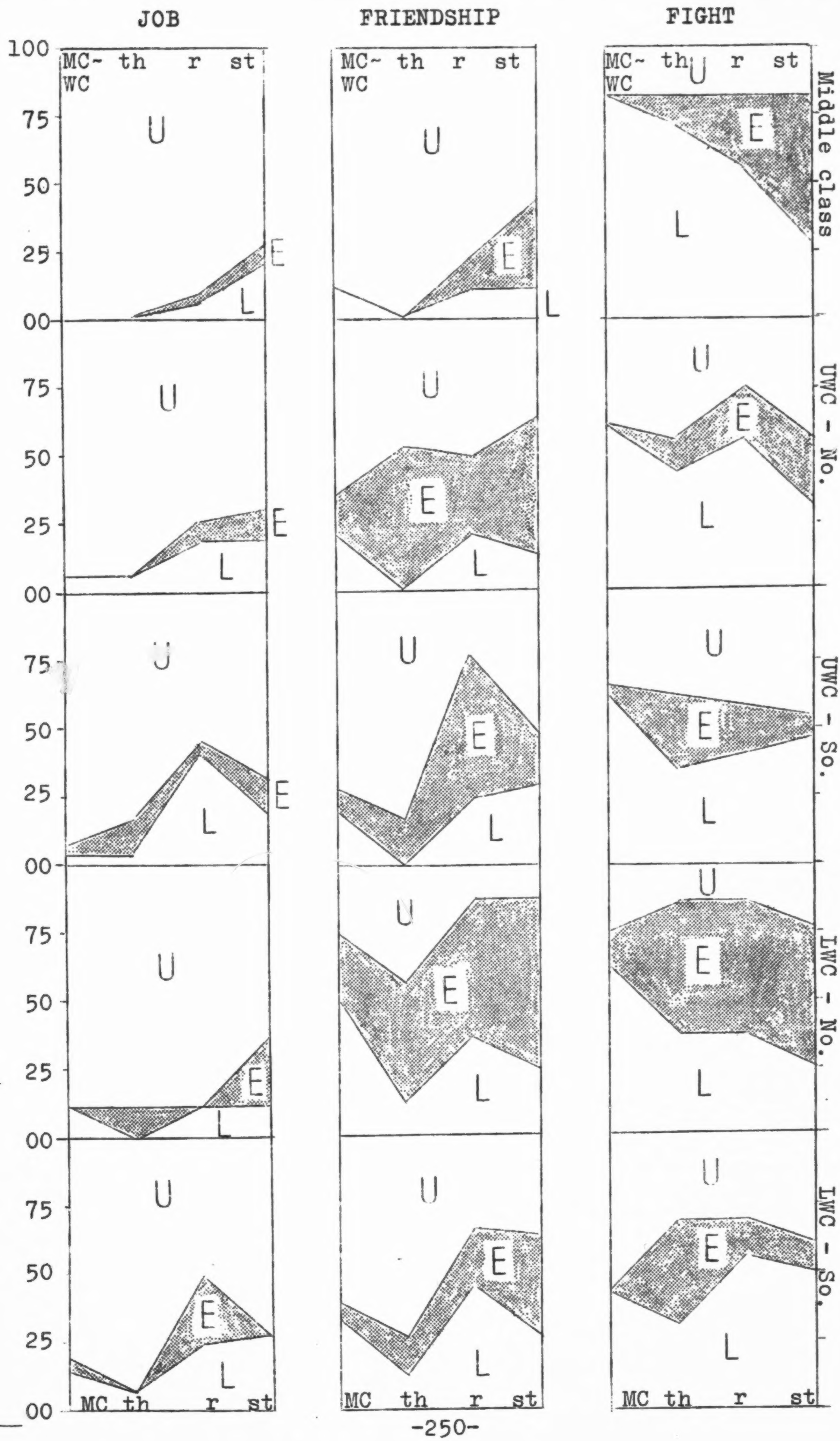


Figure 4-21.

Respons to the SR Tes

Reviewing first the separate scales, we find that the left hand column representing the Job scale shows a heavy preponderance of judgments on the "U" side. There are very few "E" judgments in this column as a whole; and the "L" judgments are quite small--smallest for MC and for Northern LWC. Note that the percentage of "U" judgments on (r) are sharply diminished for both Southern groups: as noted above, the norm of r-pronunciation is weakest for these subjects. At the same time, it is only with the Lower Working Class Southern group that the number of "E" judgments is noticeably greater--for the Upper Working Class Southerners there are plainly two norms at work--one which prefers the r-ful, the other r-less pronunciation. The fact that the Southern groups are so strikingly differentiated from the others on this scale confirms the fact that the variable (r) is the chief difference between S9 and S6, for the r-less norm is stronger in the South than anywhere else.

When we compare the two other columns to the Job column, it is immediately apparent that the percentage of "E" judgments are much greater. A large portion of the Northern LWC group in particular seems to be asserting that the phonological variables make no difference in toughness or friendship judgments, although they do count heavily in judging job suitability. For all groups, the proportion of "E" judgments is least with the MC-WC contrast; for most, it expands successively going from (th) to (r) to (st), which fits our general knowledge of the prominence of these features in social consciousness. In the case of the Southern groups, we do not see a large "E" section for (st), but the distribution here is suspiciously close to chance, and it is quite possible that many of the Southerners do not have a well-established set of social judgments in regard to (st).

As noted above, the Fight section shows a predominance of "L", but this is strongest in the Middle Class group. This fact suggests that the stereotype that associates the vernacular with toughness is strongest among middle-class speakers--and may in fact be imposed by them in the course of adolescents' contact with middle class teachers and the mass media. The Friendship pattern is quite variable, as noted above--closer analysis below will show that the Lower Working Class groups are here differentiated sharply from the others.

It may also be revealing to consider Figure 4-21 by rows, looking at each social sub-group separately. The Middle Class is plainly the most precise in its judgments, favoring "U" heavily in Jobs and Friendship, but "L" in Fights. In all cases, the number of "E" ratings is progressively greater with (r) and (st): the Fight section is a paradigm of such a development. But despite this expansion of "E", the proportions of "U" to "L" are effectively reversed in the Fight column. The Northern Upper Working Class groups follow the Middle Class pattern, but with a large increase of "E" judgments in the Friends column, and a much more even balance of "U" and "L" under Fights. In fact, for (st) this group shows a slight predominance of "U" under Fights. The vagueness of the responses to the Fight pattern for the Upper Working Class groups suggests that the stereotype which is so strong for the Middle Class is only partially absorbed by them.

The large group of Upper Working Class subjects who were raised in the South do not differ sharply from the Northern group except in their reactions to (r). Under the Friendship scale, there is a marked expansion of "E" judgments for the Southerners; in the Fight column, the Southerners do not seem to share the Northerners' bias that r-less speakers are tougher.

The most important single group for us to consider is the Lower Working Class speakers raised in the North--the predecessors, as it were, of the Jets and Cobras. As noted above, their reactions on the Job scale are strikingly similar to the Middle Class group. But the great expansion of "E" judgments in the Friend and Fight column needs to be considered. First of all, it should be clear that this large "E" section cannot represent vagueness of judgment, since it is the least likely possibility if ratings are made by chance. Nor is it true that the Northern Lower Working Class speakers confine their judgments to a very narrow range, thus increasing the possibility of "E" ratings: they show the same wide fluctuation in the Fight and Friendship scales as other groups do.[16] This group of subjects is quite small, but there is a remarkable consistency in their performance across the SR test, and one can infer that their judgments represent a realistic assessment of the situation. Unlike the Middle Class speakers, the Lower Working Class subjects are in close touch with many speakers of the vernacular, and they can reasonably judge that the vernacular "makes no difference" on both the Fight and Friendship scale. But this is not true for all of them; there are some who do choose "U" or "L" and these results will be analyzed below. As far as the Southern Lower Working Class is concerned, we see once again that they deviate most sharply from the other groups in selecting "L" under (r)--that is, in preferring r-less pronunciation more often. Under the Friendship scale, they lean heavily in the "U" direction for MC-WC and (th), but have no particular direction as far as (r) or (st) is concerned, and their reactions to all but the (r) variable are about evenly divided.

The conclusion we can draw from the over-all display of Figure 4-21 is that subjects react to the phonological differences between sentences of the same speaker in approximately the same way as they react to the great differences between individual speakers such as W.M. and F.K. The degree of precision in reactions to the variables is dependent upon two factors: (1) the distance of the individual from the speech community, (Northern vs. Southern origin), and (2) the degree of overt social stereotyping of the variable. It also appears that there is some tendency for those higher in the socio-economic scale to give more precise judgments, but it seems more likely that the Middle Class group is simply more homogeneous. The fact that the Upper Working Class runs more to divided judgments indicates that this group is indeed under the influence of two conflicting norms, and this suggestion is supported by the fact that the Northern Lower Working Class is not so much divided. A larger sample of this latter group is required to pursue the matter further.

The most important finding that appeared in our consideration of the zero pattern was that the Friendship scale was treated in an opposite manner from the other groups by the Lower Working Class. Figure 4-22a presents this pattern again, but here using only those judgments which preferred either "U" or "L". The vertical axis in Figure 4-22 shows the percentage of those who rate the higher status form higher on the scale, out of all those who give ratings that are higher or lower; that is, "U"/"U"+"L". Figure 4-22a shows reactions to the MC-WC contrast, parallel to Figure 4-19. The opposition between the Job and Fight scales is somewhat sharper than in 4-19, and it is even more apparent that there is a sudden switch in the treatment of the Friendship scale: the Lower Working Class groups align their Friendship judgments with the Fight scale rather than with the Job scale. Figure 4-22b shows the (th) variable; as we have seen, there is a strong predominance of "U" judgments even on the Fight scale for most groups. For the Middle Class and Upper Working Class groups, reactions on the Friendship scale are even more categorically in favor of "U" than on the Job scale. But once again, the Friendship scale drops to meet the Fight scale for the Northern Lower Working Class group.

In Figure 4-22c, reactions to the (r) variable are shown. In this figure it is even more apparent that the two Southern groups differ from the Northern ones in their response to (r)--for the Southern UWC group, all judgments fall close to the 50-50 mark.[17] Once again, the Friendship line matches the Job line for the higher status subjects, but switches abruptly to meet the Fight line for the Lower Working Class groups. Finally, we have Figure 4-22d, which shows reactions to the (st) variable. These responses are not as sharply differentiated as the other variables, but it can be noted once again that the Friendship line dips for the Northern Lower Working Class group to a point even lower than the Fight line, indicating that three out of four subjects who made a decision on the Friendship scale

Figure 4-22. Percent of ratings in which prestige variant was preferred out of all ratings in which one variant was preferred in SR Test.

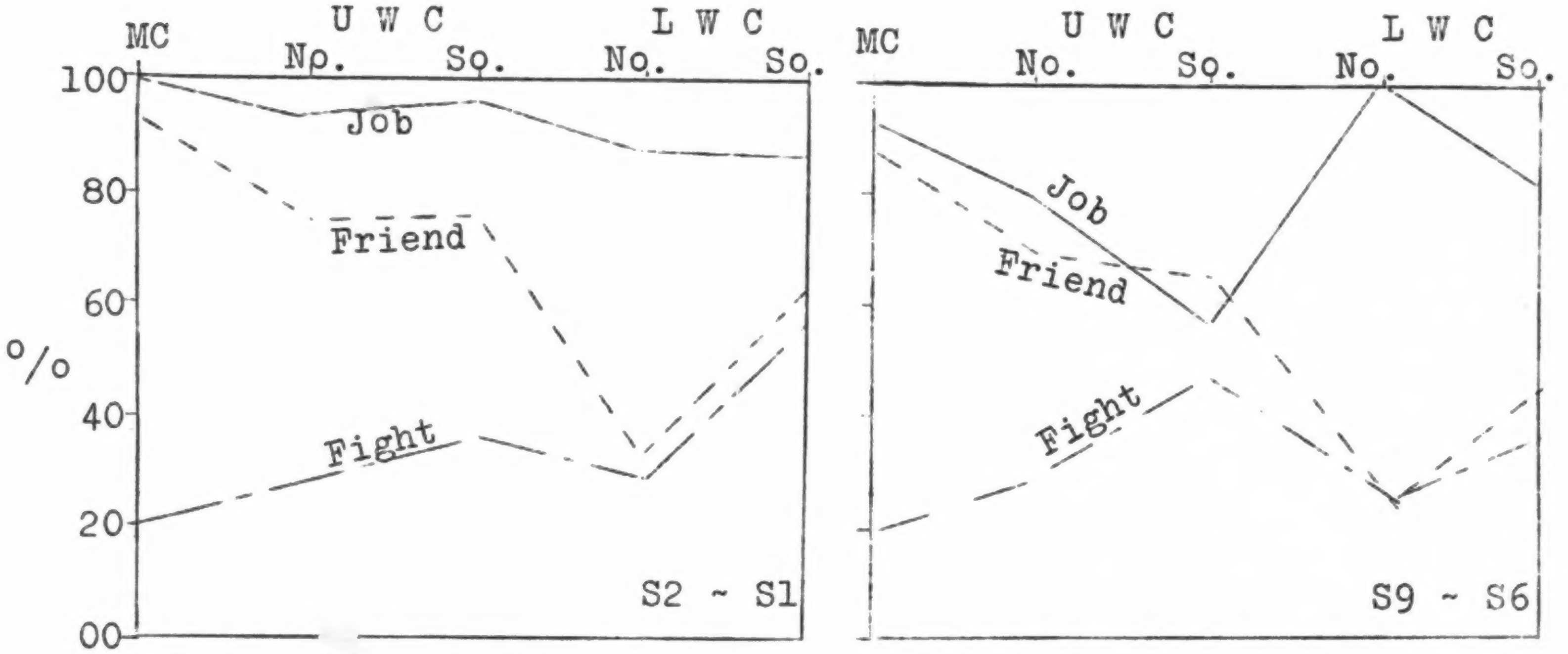


Fig. 4-22a. MC~WC Contrast

Fig. 4-22c. The (r) variable.

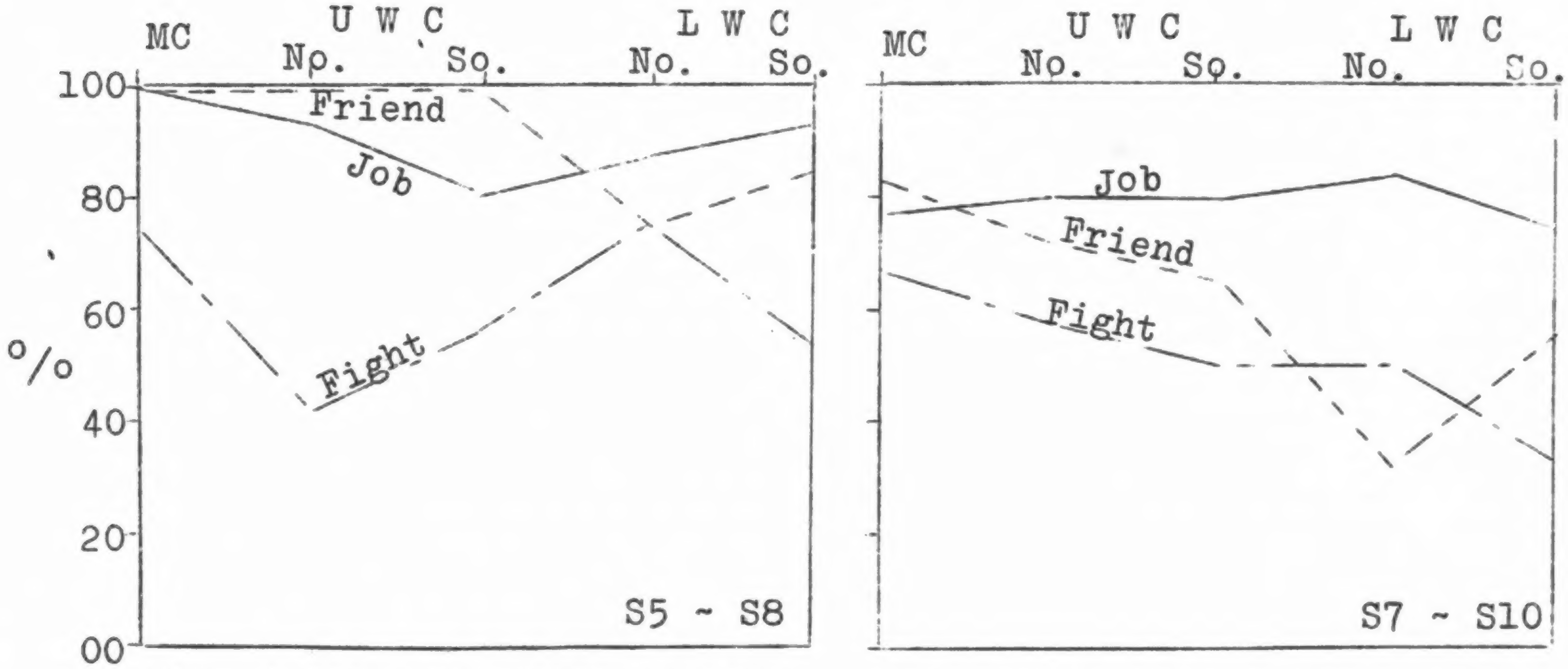


Fig. 4-22b. The (th) variable.

Fig. 4-22d. The (st) variable.

preferred the "L" variant over the "U". Thus Figure 4-22 shows that there is remarkable agreement in the Friendship judgments on all of the variables. The small size of the Northern Lower Working Class sample does not allow us to say that these subjects are truly representative of that population as a whole. But the internal consistency of their responses shows that for these subjects, at least, the differential reaction to the Friendship scale is deeply embedded in their value systems.

An even more precise view of the reaction of subjects to the SR tests can be obtained by examining the differential treatment of the three scales by each individual subject: instead of summing the contrasts made under each scale, and then comparing the averages, we can classify the reactions across the scales for each individual. If on each scale we may obtain a "U", "E" or "L" result for a given variable, then there are twenty-seven possible patterns for that variable across all three scales. In practice, however, it appears that there are only three which occur which any frequency:

	Job	Friendship	Fight
(a)	"U"	"U"	"L"
(b)	"U"	"L"	"L"
(c)	"U"	"U"	"U"

Pattern (a) is that exemplified by the Middle Class group, which awards higher job suitability to the speaker who uses a higher status form, sees this speaker as a more likely friend, but sees him as less likely to win in a street fight. Pattern (b) agrees with the first and last judgments, but sees the speaker of the lower status form as more likely to be a friend. Pattern (c) rejects the lower status form in toto: speakers who use this form are not rated higher on any scale.

Table 4-12 shows the distribution of these patterns for the MC-WC contrast which compares the "U" speech of S2 with the "L" speech of S2. The total of all other patterns are grouped together under (d). The numbers here are smaller than in Table 4-9, since there are a number of subjects who did not complete all three scales. The distribution shown in Table 4-12 fully confirms the conclusions drawn from less precise methods. The preferred pattern for the Middle Class and Upper Working Class is plainly (a); the Lower Working Class subjects raised in the North are the only group which shows the (b) pattern to any extent, and this is the dominant choice for them; the Southern LWC group leans towards pattern (c)--considering the educated Northern speech of F.K. superior in all respects. The switch of the

TABLE 4-12

DISTRIBUTION OF PRINCIPAL SR TEST PATTERNS

Pattern		UWC		LWC			
J Fr Fi	MC	No.	So.	No.	So.	PR	Tot
(a) U U L	④	⑤	⑨	0	1	0	19
(b) U L L	1	2	4	④	2	2	13
(c) U U U	1	3	5	1	⑤	③	15
(d) Other	0	4	5	3	⑦	0	19

friendship value to match the toughness value registered on the Fight scale is thus seen to be a property of the individuals studied, and not merely an artifact of aggregate scoring.

So far, we have not considered differences between men and women on the SR test. In general, sex differences are important in subjective reactions, since women (for all but the lower class) tend to favor the higher status pattern more than men, and show stronger tendencies towards correction of their own speech in formal styles. In the small table given below, it can be seen that women favor pattern (a) more than men, and that men favor pattern (b). Since pattern (a) is a direct reflection of one's personal endorsement of middle class norms, this tendency fits in with the general direction of sexual differences observed in other studies.

Pattern	Men	Women
(a)	8	12
(b)	10	5
(c)	8	10
(d)	8	10

4.6.7. Testing other adults. Results such as those obtained above can easily be duplicated with any small sample of adults speakers within the speech community, since categorical judgments on speech are so strongly held. For example, Table 4-13 shows the results for the SR test taken by a small group of six graduate students of varied backgrounds: this sample included four white subjects and two Negroes: one raised in Harlem, and the other in British Guiana (who strictly speaking was not a member of the speech community we are studying). The triplet of six numbers again represents "U", "E" and "L" judgments.

TABLE 4-13

SR RESPONSES OF SIX MIDDLE CLASS SUBJECTS

Variable	Job Scale	Fight Scale
WC~MC	6/0/0	0/2/3
(th)	6/0/0	1/2/2
(r)	5/0/1	0/1/4
(st)	5/1/0	1/2/2

The British Guianan subject did not feel competent to judge the fight scale and marked all ratings "possibly", so that only five are shown on the right. Despite the small numbers involved here, this group matches the judgments of the larger adult sample reported above on the Job scale. Reactions on the Fight scale are less decisive, but in every case "L" judgments dominate over "D" judgments.

Various other trials drawn from the five preliminary versions of the SR test show the same general uniformity on the part of adult respondents. Since none of these variables are specific to the New York City speech community, we can expect to obtain uniform results from speakers in any Northern city.

4.6.8. Puerto Rican responses to the SR test. In the course of the adult sample, six working class Puerto Rican subjects were interviewed and given the SR test. Although this is too small a sample to be analyzed in any detail, Table 4-14 shows the difference between the Puerto Rican and Negro responses to the SR test:

TABLE 4-14

SR RESPONSES OF SIX PUERTO RICAN SUBJECTS

		Scale	
Variable	Job	Friend	Fight
MC~WC	6/0/0	4/0/2	3/0/3
(th)	4/2/0	2/3/1	4/1/1
(r)	2/1/3	3/0/3	2/0/4
(st)	2/3/1	2/1/3	1/1/4

The Puerto Rican group apparently matches the white middle class group shown in Table 4-13 as far as reactions to the MC~WC contrast and the (th) variable on the Job scale are concerned. The other variables and the other scales do not show any clear pattern. Since the Puerto Ricans are further outside the sociolinguistic structure we have been considering than any other group, it stands to reason that only the most heavily stereotyped variables on the most prominent scale will be registered in their reactions. Possibly the reaction on the Friend scale to the MC~WC opposition is significant, but otherwise we do not find the regularity of Table 4-13 or the sub-groups considered in 4.6.6.

4.6.9. Responses of pre-adolescents to the SR test. The previous study of New York City showed that the uniformity of subjective responses is a characteristic of adult members of the community. The unanimity of subjective responses to (r), for example, falls off rapidly below the age of 18, and even middle class adolescents give uneven results on such tests (Labov 1966: 435). It is true that middle class children do better than working-class children (Labov 1965) but on the whole adult norms in subjective reactions are acquired later than most linguistic abilities. Children may be very well aware there is a difference between the speech of the teacher and their own, or between announcers and ordinary people, but the social significance of this difference is surprisingly elusive as far as children are concerned.

We administered a preliminary version of the SR test (No. I) to ten students age 11 to 13 in a Harlem school, P.S. 79. Only the Job scale was used, but it gives us some opportunity to measure the preciseness of reactions to variables at this age. Since the most uniform reactions in other sub-groups have been with the MC~WC contrast on the Job scale, we would expect that these youngsters would do best on the S2~S1 contrast. One of the informants--an eleven-year-old--was eliminated from the sample, since he marked almost all 0's on the scale. The rest give the responses shown below:

Variable	Job scale
MC~WC	6/2/1
(r)	1/0/8
(st)	3/1/5

The contrast between F.K. and W.M. is reacted to by these young subjects, but neither of the other variables are.

4.6.10. Responses of the Cobras to the SR Tests. At the beginning of the last group session with the Cobras, the SR Test (in Version III) was administered to seven members. This test included the Job scale, in the same form as for adolescents, and the Fight scale as well, but with the following labels against the eight levels of the

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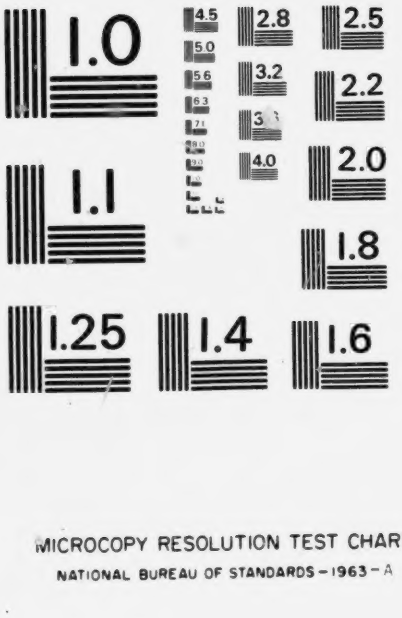

1.0
4.5
5.0
5.6
6.3
7.1
8.0
9.0
2.8
3.2
3.6
4.0
2.5
2.2
2.0
1.1
1.8
1.25
1.4
1.6

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

SR form:

How tough do you think the speaker would be in a street fight?

Stone Killer
Killer
Tough
Average
Lame
Turkey
Punk
Faggot

In addition, a fourth scale of Self-Knowledge was used, which relates the variables to this fundamental concept of religious nationalism. At this time, the Cobras had already passed through their "Bohemian Brothers" stage, and had become full members of the Nation of Islam. Those Cobras who did not endorse the Muslim religion were no longer members of the group, and all seven of these subjects had Islamic attributes (Kahím, Túmar, Rahín, Bashím, Markí). They were strongly indoctrinated with the many special doctrines peculiar to this sect, briefly discussed above in 4.1 and 4.2.5.

Self-knowledge, or knowledge of the self, is recognition of one's origin and potentiality. In this black Muslim view, black or colored men were the original human beings, and white men were created later, by evil intent. The traditional behavior pattern of the Southern Negro, exemplified by the Uncle Tom image, shows a complete lack of self-knowledge, and other customs which attempt to erase black nature in favor of superficial white attributes are also signs of this failing: processing and straightening the hair, bleaching the skin, and so on. It is not clear where language lies in this ideological framework. Some aspects of the NNE vernacular may be clearly identified as Uncle Tomming, but many features are identified in some way with Negro or black culture in general. The criteria shift rapidly as the situational context changes. It can be observed that the leaders of the black nationalist community use standard English in their formal speeches, and even in many informal addresses to in-gatherings: that is, their basic grammar is closer to SE than NNE, although there will be many isolated examples of vernacular use.

The scale of Self-Knowledge therefore allows the subject to identify a speaker with the most favorable attributes possible. The labels on the eight-point scale were:

How much self-knowledge would you guess that the speaker has?

Allah
Brother
Original man
Afro
Negro
Brainwashed
Pork chop
Stone pork chop

A pork chop is a term for a person with the minimum self-knowledge, who follows all of the traditional Southern customs that have been imposed upon him by the white man. Eating pork is the cardinal sin in Muslim ideology (one of the Bohemian Brothers once boasted that he would kill a certain ex-member as soon as he could prove that he had been eating pork). The term Negro has also become somewhat pejorative. On the other hand, the four upper terms are all positive. Afro, short for "Afro-American" was the favored term for Negroes in early nationalist terms (replaced more often by Black today). The other three terms represent an attempt to erect a hierarchy of more and more favorable concepts--not entirely successful, since some members protested that if a person was original man, then he was necessarily a Brother. Similarly, if a person was a pork chop, he was necessarily a stone pork chop. The labels on the scale were therefore reduced to four for later tests:

Allah
Brother
Brainwashed
Stone pork chop

But the full scale of eight terms was used for the tests reported below in Table 4-15.

TABLE 4-15

RESPONSES OF THE COBRAS TO THE SR TEST

	Scale		
Variable	Job	Self-Knowledge	Fight
MC~WC	6/0/1	0/0/7	1/0/6
(th)	7/0/0	0/3/4	1/2/4
(r)	6/1/0	0/1/6	1/0/6
(st)	5/0/2	2/1/4	2/1/4

It is immediately apparent that the Self-Knowledge scale is alligned with the toughness value on the Fight scale. The responses of the Cobras do not bear out the observations made above on the imprecise character of adolescent reactions to subjective evaluation tests. The figures of Table 4-15 have a clarity equal to that of any of the adult sub-groups discussed above.

On the Job scale, reactions are weighted heavily in favor of MC S2 as against WC S1; unanimously in favor of the fricative form of (th); and almost as strongly for constricted (r)-1. As in many other test results, the least regular is (st), which yields only five out of seven in favor of the intact clusters; we do not see much greater uniformity on this variable for any of the adult groups, either.

The Cobras reverse this pattern nicely on the Fight scale. The reversal is even stronger than we find with adults, particularly in the case of (th), where a majority of the Cobras prefer the lower-status form. Again, the (st) pattern is the least clear, with a bare majority rating the lower-status form higher, and two of the seven disagreeing.

Reactions to the Self-Knowledge scale match the Fight scale. The positive evaluation which the adult series expressed on the Friendship scale is here expressed on this ideological scale. For the Cobras, this scale offers them a means of expressing their strongest positive feelings about a speaker. The Cobras are certainly members of the Northern Lower Working Class, and it is no accident that they duplicate the pattern which was seen in the adult sample. This finding also confirms for us that the reactions of the relatively small group of adults did in fact show us the value system of the NNE vernacular.

The fact that the Cobras show such a clear and uniform pattern would be surprising if this test was administered to each member individually. However, the test was given to the group of seven members together, and there was considerable interaction on some items. Given the atmosphere of the group sessions, it would hardly be possible for us to impose the rule that no one must say anything while marking his form. Several Cobras reacted with loud remarks to particular sentences; some looked at each other's markings. As a result, some of the ratings are actually group reactions, rather than individual decisions, and therefore are more uniform than they would be otherwise. This was not so much the case with the Job scale, but on the Fight scale all seven members marked F.K. "Lame" on level 3. This was undoubtedly in response to a group decision. On the Self-Knowledge test, six out of seven marked W.M. as "Brainwashed", No. 3., and six out of seven marked the same speaker in S4 at the bottom of the scale, a "Stone pork chop". This was no doubt in response to the extra-long drawl on "I wasn't too bi-ig" which differentiates S4 from S1, and illustrates the antagonism of the group toward extreme Southernisms. The fact that S1 was preferred to S2 on the Self-Knowledge scale does not mean that S1 was in fact admired, but rather that S2 was more heavily downgraded. Six out of seven marked F.K. as a "Pork chop", and one as a "Stone pork chop." The relative ratings on the Self-Knowledge scale were generally pejorative. That is natural enough when one realizes that most adults in Harlem are not Muslims, let alone "Five Per Centers"; the very term "Five Per Center" indicates that members of this group think of themselves as a small minority. Furthermore, the Cobras enjoyed using the labels of the Fight and Self-Knowledge scale to put the speakers down; it was a special kind of sounding. It is interesting to note that the only sentence rated consistently on the positive side was S6--F.K. using r-less pronunciation in a slow, somewhat mannered style. He received five votes for "Original Man" (level 5) and one for "Brother" (level 6).

Although the Cobras' judgments aligned the Self-Knowledge scale with the Fight scale, the level of judgments were by no means the same. W.M. was put down as "Brainwashed" on the Self-Knowledge scale, but on the Fight scale he was consistently heard as a "Killer", or a "Stone Killer". F.K.'s r-less sentence was rated even more consistently at the highest level on the fight scale, as a "Stone Killer". There was something in the deliberately r-less character of this sentence which evoked a favorable response, for F.K.'s zero sentence put him down as a "Lame" (No. 3)

The average judgments of the Cobras for the four sentences of the zero pattern are shown in Figure 4-23. On the Job scale, the S2 of F.K. is the highest, and the Northern form of T.L. on S3 was rated almost as low as W.M., which is very different from the adult view. The Fight scale accordingly lowers S2 much further than S3. The reliability of the Cobras judgments is supported by the fact that the Fight scale is the mirror image of the Job scale.

In general, we can observe that the uniformity of the Cobra SR tests is due to the fact that it was taken as a group, and that members influenced each other to a certain extent. This makes the result all the more valuable, in that these reactions show the direction in which the culture of the peer group acts upon language. It is worth noting that the Cobras are familiar with test situations, and know that tests such as these are supposed to be individual judgments. Loud comments on the speakers, and looking at each others' marking sheets were forms of disruptive behavior: the Cobras were "cheating". But the Cobras disruption was not based on the notion of simply being "bad" (4.2.4). Throughout this second group session they took a principled stand that it was no longer possible to cooperate with groups such as ours which included whites and represented white authority: that if John Lewis did so, he had "fallen". The Cobras had a coherent ideology and it was this ideology which they expressed as a group in the SR Tests.

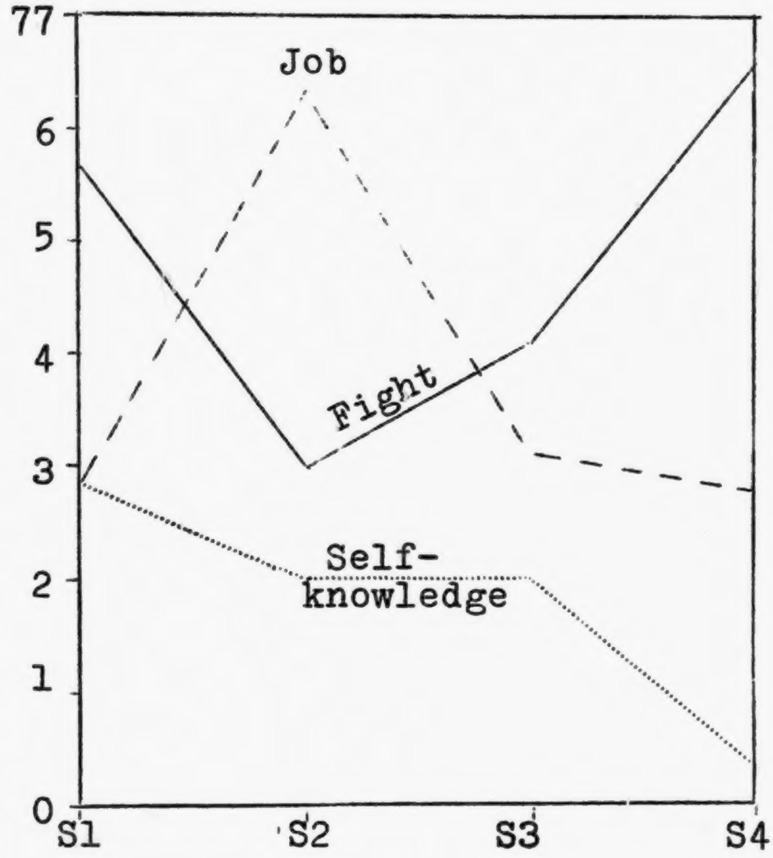


Fig. 4-23. Average numerical ratings for seven Cobras on the zero sentences of the SR Test.

4.6.11. The Jets' subjective reactions. The consistency of the Cobras' SR tests is matched by inconsistent and relatively incoherent responses from the Jets. Twenty boys from the Jet neighborhood, ranging in age from 10 to 16 years old, were given the SR test individually. In most of the tests, four scales were use: Job, Fight, Friendship and Self-Knowledge. Eleven of these boys were core members of the Jets club, and the rest were lames or marginal members. None of the totals show the clear pattern we have seen in other test results, but some degree of order begins to emerge when we separate the boys 10 to 13 years old (mostly 12 and 13) from those 14 to 16 years old. Table 4-16 shows responses for these two groups separately.

TABLE 4-16

RESPONSES OF THE JETS TO THE SR TEST

		Variables			
Age	N	MC~WC	(th)	(r)	(st)
JOB SCALE					
10-13	7	2/0/5	4/0/2	3/1/3	4/2/1
14-16	7	3/0/3	3/1/3	3/0/4	1/1/2
		5/0/8	7/1/5	6/1/7	5/3/3
FIGHT SCALE					
10-13	11	1/0/10	4/1/6	1/3/7	5/2/4
14-16	9	1/1/7	6/1/2	3/3/4	6/0/3
		2/1/17	10/2/8	4/6/11	11/2/7
FRIENDS SCALE					
10-13	8	4/0/4	4/2/2	0/6/2	4/2/2
14-16	5	2/0/3	5/0/0	2/0/3	2/0/3
		6/0/7	9/2/0	2/6/5	6/2/5
SELF-KNOWLEDGE					
10-13	9	1/0/8	1/1/7	1/1/5	3/2/3
14-16	[illegible]	3/2/3	2/3/2	1/2/4	3/1/0
		4/2/11	3/4/9	2/3/9	6/3/3

The Job scale shows no pronounced direction of choice on any variable for either age group. But the Fight scale is a different matter. For the MC~WC contrast, both age groups show the expected preference for the working-class speaker. The younger group leans in this direction for the (th) variable, and shows a strong preference for the lower-status form of (r). But the older group registers no such clear pattern for any of the phonological variables.

The Friendship scale shows no particular pattern, except that the older Jets reject the lower-status (th) form as most others do. The Self-Knowledge scale is the clearest, at least as far as the younger group is concerned. They prefer the lower-status item for the MC~WC contrast, for (th) and for (r). The only variable which is not clear here is (st), and this is not an unexpected result. On the other hand, the older Jets show no particular direction on the Self-Knowledge scale at all.

The vague nature of the Jet response can only be interpreted in speculative terms. There is considerable resistance to the Self-Knowledge scale on the part of the Jets, especially from the older members. There are ten instances on this scale in which no response was given at all, whereas there are no such cases with the Cobras. This may be due to the fact that the Self-Knowledge scale was the fourth one, and fatigue may have set in, but the overt attitudes expressed by the Jets against black nationalism cannot be ignored. The younger group may be coming under increasing influence from that quarter and this increasing awareness may be reflected in their responses. In general, the Jets' way of disrupting the test situation was the opposite of the Cobras' . One gets the impression that they gave the test as little attention as possible. The fact that the Cobras have an ideology, and the Jets do not, may be involved in this difference in response. At the same time, the Jets are full participants in the NNE sub-culture, and in this connection it is significant that the Jets were clearer on the Fight scale than on the Job scale. Their distance from adult norms is seen in the vagueness of their responses to the job suitability scale. But undoubtedly the largest difference between the Jet and Cobra tests is in the situation; the Jets were given the test individually, or in pairs. They did not disrupt the test situation as the Cobras did by vociferous group participation, and the fluctuations that we observe in their responses are the reactions of individuals who are not sure what the test is all about, and in any case don't care much one way or the other. Test situations bring out the anarchistic streak in the Jets--the general resistance to authority which is fully demonstrated in the group sessions.

4.7 Family Background [FB] Test

Immediately before the SR Test, adult subjects took the Family Background Test, which tested ability to identify the ethnic background of fourteen speakers. The main focus was on the dimension of white vs. Negro. Although it is obvious to all linguists that "Negro speech" or "non-standard Negro English" describes a social dialect, there is a widespread belief that Negro dialect is a "racial" feature which depends upon some physiological difference in the speech organs (or mental capacities) of Negroes. This folk belief is expressed in the notion that "one can always tell" whether one is speaking to a Negro or a white man over the telephone. Our primary interest in the Family Background Test was to investigate the range of ability to recognize the more obvious dialect stereotypes as clues to ethnic identity (in a social rather than a biological sense), and also discover what dialect features were most effective in communicating such identification. At the same time, it seemed appropriate to make a definitive and objective demonstration of a fact which has long been clear from a great deal of informal and anecdotal evidence--that there is no single property of "Negro Speech" common to all Negroes that can be identified by anyone, no matter how knowledgeable and sophisticated he may be.

We are now in a good position to interpret the results of such discrimination tests because the SR Tests clearly demonstrate the capacity of members of a speech community to achieve near-unanimous discrimination on the socio-economic scale. Responses to the MC~WC contrast on the Job scale were remarkably uniform for all social groups in our adult sample, and even for most of the adolescents. It remains to be seen if any of the discriminations of speakers on the FB test could achieve this level of agreement.

4.7.1. Form and structure of the FB Test. The form for the FB Test poses the question, "What is the family background of the speaker?" Marks may be entered for each sentence in blanks labelled:

Irish
Italian
Afro-American
Spanish
Jewish
German
Other white

The subject is given the additional note, "If you want to show section of the country, write in : "S" for Southern, "N" for Northern, "W" for Western."

He then gives his reaction to fourteen tape-recorded passages, each played only once. The first four sentences are ~~as~~ a "zero pattern" with no reference to the white-Negro contrast. No. 1 is the white vernacular of New York City, and Nos. 2, 3, 4 are heavily marked examples of foreign influence on English.

1. R.B. A working-class New York City woman of Italian background, telling a story about the danger of death in the white vernacular.

2. S.A. A native speaker of Yiddish talking about the learning of English, with a strong Yiddish accent.

3. J.C. A native Spanish speaker from Cuba reading from "Nobody Knows Your Name" with a strong Spanish accent.

4. F.C. A native of Cork, Ireland, telling a story about the use of th pronunciation in Irish schools, with a strong Irish accent.

The next ten items are all concerned with the contrast of Northern vs. Southern and white vs. Negro speech. Four of the passages are spoken by whites and six by Negroes. There is one clear example of the NNE vernacular, and several of characteristic white Southern speech, but also of more difficult combinations of background and ethnic identity. There are two examples of whites raised with strong Negro influence, two of Negroes raised in a white community, and two of Negroes who show the moderate influence of the Northern Negro community in their careful speech.

5. W.McT. A middle-aged white man, former sheriff of Beaufort County, South Carolina, giving his theories on the caste situation in America to a white interviewer. Characteristic middle-class white speech of coastal South Carolina.

6. D.R. A middle-aged Negro woman, high-school graduate, raised in North Carolina and now working as a seamstress in New York, talking about common sense to a white interviewer. Characteristic careful speech of Upper Working Class Negro adult with strong SE influence.

7. H.S. A middle-aged Negro man, raised in Kentucky, talking about his mining experience to a Negro interviewer. No audible sign of NNE influence--South Midland dialect characteristic of the area.

8. W.McT. The white speaker of No. 5, talking about fishing and building to a Negro carpenter who came into the office during the interview.

9. B.T. A young white woman teacher from North Carolina, reading from "Nobody Knows Your Name". Strong North Carolina phonology.

10. Dan Watts. The editor of The Liberator, a nationalist Negro newspaper, in an excerpt from a radio interview. Northern educated SE speech with very few characteristics of the urban Negro community.

11. W.McG. An older Negro, self-educated working-class man, raised in New York City, telling a story about the danger of death. Careful speech, reflecting the vernacular of the older Northern Negro community.

12. D.H. A young Negro woman, raised in the white community on Staten Island, the wife of a New York City policeman, talking about common sense to a white interviewer. Characteristic lower-middle-class New York City speech, with no obvious relation to NNE.

13. D.R. The same Negro woman speaker as in No. 6, talking to a close friend and relative over the telephone about intimate family matters. Classic example of the NNE vernacular.

14. J.D. An adolescent lower-class white boy of Irish Italian background, living on the Lower East Side in hostile but close relations with Negroes, telling a story about a violent encounter with Negroes. Definite Negro influence on the WNS vernacular.

The content and dialect characteristic of these passages will be given in detail in the discussion of the results.

4.7.2. The zero section. The level of success in correctly identifying the family background of speakers was quite low, and it was not very different for any particular class or regional group in our adult sample. The first four items were designed to test this general ability, independently of the white-Negro dimension. We may usefully compare five groups of subjects: the adult Negro sample as a whole; the Middle Class section of that sample; nine adult graduate students who took the test; seven Cobras; and nineteen boys from the Jet area.

TABLE 4-17

°/o CORRECT IDENTIFICATION IN ZERO SECTION OF FB TEST

	N	No. 1 2nd. gen. Italian	No. 2 1st gen. Jewish	No. 3 1st. gen. Spanish	No. 4 1st. gen. Irish
Total adult Harlem sample	110	21	63	52	26
Middle class Harlem sample	15	07	57	72	14
Graduate students	9	44	78	78	33
Cobras, 13-15	7	00	14	29	00
Jets, 10-16	19	05	26	37	05

There were no remarkable successes in this test, although No. 2 and No. 3, at least, were chosen as archetypes, to be as simple as possible. There is no significant difference between the Middle Class section of the NNE sample and the group as a whole. The highest scores were made by the group of graduate students, and the lowest by the adolescent NNE members. Even the best of the lot, the group of graduate students, did not show any great proficiency on this test. The balance of the FB test cannot be interpreted without bearing in mind this low level of skill at ethnic identification from linguistic cues.

It is not possible to evaluate even this negative finding without having the texts of the sample passages, with some indication of the most important signals which were or were not grasped by the listeners. We will therefore give these texts in ordinary spelling which will show some of the dialect features, and add notes about the most striking features that are not easily shown in print. In all of these extracts, vocalized /r/ will be placed in parentheses.

No. 1. An extract from an interview with a fluent working-class speaker of the New York City vernacular. Most listeners will place the speaker in Brooklyn, by the common folk stereotype which identifies working-class speech with Brooklyn and lower-middle-class speech with the Bronx. She is actually a 39-year old resident of the Lower East Side. The most striking feature of her phonology is the very high vowel in *grabbed* and *rasslin'* which has attained the height of the vowel in *here*. This is a normal development of the vernacular, more characteristic of Italians than of Jews (Labov 1966:294-301). The *th* of *thought* is an affricate, and *that* shows a stop; the rest are standard fricatives.

> and--uh--an' I grabbed him, I s's 'f'e--I--in my thought 'n'magination, I says, if he went down *that* deep, whoever it is he's good enough to take me up. I figu(r)ed he's--must be a good swimme(r). An I grabbed him, I grabbed him so much, an' he kept pushin' me, an' I grabbed him by the leg, bec-- y'know we were really rass(l)in' unde(r)neath the water, an' I kept grabbin' 'im by the head, the-- by he(r)e, until finally he socked me. [Laughs]. [IVer: Oh...] An' he pulled me out of the pool.

The back vowel of *water* is high, but not as high as that of the corresponding front vowel in *grabbed*. Though this subtle differentiation and other clues might enable one to identify the Italian background of the speaker, it would not be uncommon for other New Yorkers to say that she was Jewish. Forty-six percent of the Harlem sample identified her in this way; only the graduate students showed a predominance of the "Italian" judgment over "Jewish". We will not insist on the significance of the identification here, but will return to No. 1 in looking at the percentage of correct identifications of Negro vs. white.

No. 2. This might be called a "classic" Jewish accent, because almost every feature of phonology, intonation, and syntax shows Yiddish influence. The speaker's wife can also be heard in this passage: both are elderly people with the same Yiddish dialect. Perhaps the most striking single Yiddish feature is the pronunciation of perfect as [pɔɪfɪk't'], with a double release of the *-kt* cluster: that is, the *k* is released first, and then the *t*.

{S.A.: Of cou(r)se when I came here he's--he's--he's--
(Wife: After all he had to learn

{S.A.: the language was not's--I wasn't so
(Wife: English

S.A.: much in the *grind* of it--to--to speak with everybody an' catch what everybody--catch *on*. I knew--but to get along. So ve used to go in the night school--the night--they didn't work at *night*, night schools...

IVer: To get perfect--uh--English or to get the grammar of the English..
{S.A.: The gram--a little of everything. Look--
(Wife: You don't get perfect,

S.A.: when you reach the age--in the twenties--when
Wife: when you are old and you don't get perfect

S.A.: you worked all day you can't get of them [all]
Wife: [pɔɪfɪk't'].

S.A.: perfect; 'cause -ah--y'got to be *bo(r)n he(r)e*
IVer: Yeh.

S.A.: to speak perfect.

Wife: Not only that--when you work the whole day you

Wife: can't--uh-you go to school at night...for two
S.A.: You can't give

Wife: hours or such-so-
S.A.: much time *either*. You can't learn-uh-so much
English. It's different teaching.

The intonation contours of these speakers very often rise from the second to third pitch level at the end of a clause. The short *a* in can't is characteristically [ɛ]. The *w* in *we* becomes a fricative. The short *i* in *little* is close to [i]. Syntactic forms such as *in the grammar of the English*; *to go in the night schools*; *you can't learn so much English*, all suggest the heavy influence of a foreign language. These speakers live in Harlem, and certainly the adults of the Harlem sample have heard many similar Jewish accents from storekeepers. Yet surprisingly enough, no group made identification close to 100°/o, even among the middle class subjects.

No. 3. A passage from the reading "Nobody Knows Your Name" showing heavy influence of Cuban Spanish.

> I did tell her "Look--Eleano(r)--Everybody can' be a sta(r). I am not a fo(r)*werd*. I am not a cente(r). I am not a ward. I play the back cou(r)t.

There is a palatalized *l* in *Eleanor*, an odd shift of stress in *forward*, and a change of the *g* in *guard* to *w*. The level intonation on the second pitch level, and the even spacing of the syllables convey the sense of Spanish influence more than any other feature. If this had been a Puerto Rican speaker, the test would have been easier. As it was, the effect of contact with Spanish dialects shows up in the peformance of the Cobras and Jets, who did relatively better on this item than any other. But again, over-all identification was not particularly high for any sub-group.

No. 4. The speaker is a young Irishman, who spent almost all his life in Cork, at the time a graduate student in linguistics visiting Indiana University. Another Irishman--a native Gaelic speaker--is heard briefly at the beginning.

IVer: -uh--the difference between these things..

M.M.: Dere's a lot of talk about pronouncing "th's"... they nobody but--tend to the story about...

J.C.: Eh now--in the schools, this is a very famous one--like in the schools, the schoolmaster stands up an' 'e says, "Now today we're going to practice English pronunciation." [Thumps desk]. "An' you must not say 'dis, dat, dese an' dose'. You must say 'dis', 'dat', 'dese' an' 'dose'!"

This passage is heavily marked with Anglo-Irish features. Vowels are monophthongs, and the intonation curve rises at the end of the sentence in regular Cork style. But knowledge of genuine Irish dialect seems to be very low in all sub-sections of this sample group.

4.7.3. Identification of Negroes and whites. The balance of the FB test is concerned with the contrast between Negro and white speakers drawn from various regions of the North and the South. In the following discussion, we will only deal with the question as to how many subjects identified a given speaker as Negro and how many as white, correctly or incorrectly: the distribution of other categories will not be considered here in any detail. Table 4-18 gives the percent correct in terms of Afro-American vs. all the other categories.

The total number of correct identification ranges between 30 and 66 percent. Adults do not do strikingly better than adolescents, and the graduate students do better than the Harlem adults only for white speakers,--for Negro speakers they do worse. The various sub-groups of the Harlem sample considered before do not show any systematic differences in the FB Test; the Middle Class is not particularly better than the Working Class sub-groups. Considering the fact that Northern vs. Southern speech is such an important parameter here, it might seem that we would see differences if we separate the Northern and the Southern groups of the Working Class. But this breakdown does not throw any light on the situation. The percentages of correct responses were:

FB No.	5	8	9	14	12	7	10
Northern	64	27	54	44	34	21	35
Southern	52	32	46	54	42	21	38

TABLE 4-18

PERCENT CORRECT IDENTIFICATION OF NEGRO VS. WHITE

		(A) Zero Section				(B) White speakers				Average of (B)
	N	1	2	3	4	5	8	9	14	
Adult sample	110	98	100	90	94	58	35	49	51	40
Graduate students	9	100	100	100	100	44	22	22	71	61
Cobras	7	86	100	100	100	29	43	71	14	65
Jets 10-13	10	50	100	100	100	40	30	20	50	66
14-16	9	100	100	100	89	22	33	56	22	

		(C) Negro Speakers						Average of(C)
	N	12	7	10	11	6	13	
Adult sample	110	39	21	37	37	83	94	44
Graduate students	9	00	13	00	29	44	100	30
Cobras	7	43	00		14		71	29
Jets 10-13	10	11	40	30	22	20	40	38
14-16	9	22	33	22		44	33	

Whatever social or psychological characteristics determine relative success in rating a particular speaker, they are not the ones that we have considered so far in this report.

We will now present the text of the individual passages of the FB test, with comments on the dialect features that are relevant to NNE vs. SE and the North-South distinction. As before, the vocalization of /r/ is represented as (r). Deleted consonants are indicated with apostrophes. Many of the important dialect features are matters of timing, pitch contour, and stress, which we will not discuss in detail. Our intuitive judgments may rely heavily upon these cues, but they are difficult to present here accurately. Most of our illustrative comments will therefore deal with vowels and consonants and grammar, but this should not be taken as a measure of the items we or the subjects actually use in making a decision.

White speakers. The first four passages to be given will be those spoken by whites--three from the South and one from the North.

No. 5. W. McT. The speaker was for many years the sheriff of Beaufort County, South Carolina. This is a region in the Sea Islands midway between Charleston and Savannah. The white speech characteristic of the Charleston area is said to show the influence of Gullah as well as its original Anglophile imprint: the most striking features of the phonology are the long monophthongs for the word classes of say and go, the merger of beer and bear at a very low vowel, almost [æ], and the extreme centralization of the nuclei of /ay/ and /aw/ before voiceless consonants. W. McT. was first encountered when the interviewer was talking to his Negro employees on a shrimp boat dock in the marshes of St. Helena Island. The interview took place in W. McT.'s office in the town of Beaufort. W. McT. graduated from high school, but did not go to college. He believes that he knows the Negro people of the area very well, and that they in turn like him.[18] He regards himself as an expert on Negro history and folkways, and this passage is extracted from a long speech in which he gave his views on the Negro question.

> Oh goodness, you come to Beaufo(r)t an' try to get in with the uppe(r) echelon, until you try to do it an' see how much success you have. We'(r)e not kiddin' each othe(r). We--The(re) a(re) a thousand castes in India, an' the(re) a(re) a hundred castes in America. Come to Beaufort, go to Cha(r)leston, go to yo' home town. An' find out 'bout the caste system. You don't have to find out about--you know about it.

Note that /r/ is dropped before vowels twice in There are--this dialect has a very high level of r-lessness. There is a crucial consonant cluster -sts in castes. As noted above (3.2.4, 3.9.5), NNE has an obligatory simplification to casses [kæsəz] or cas'[kæs:]. But W. McT. pronounces the [sts] clusters with particular clarity in the first case, though he does drop the t in caste system. One of the regional features of the dialect shows up in his centralization of out and about, in contrast to the fronting of town as [tæ^{o}n]. The deletion of postvocalic schwa in yo' should be noted.

A remarkably high percentage of subjects identified No. 5 as Negro: a total of 58 percent of all adults. There were even more Southerners than Northerners --64 percent of those raised in the South wrongly identified W. McT. as a Negro. Why? First of all, it is possible that the position of No. 5, coming directly after four speakers who were obviously white, may have made him a natural candidate for the "Afro-American" category. It is also possible that listeners mistook his reference to the "upper echelons" to mean white society as a whole, rather than the upper class society from which W. McT. (as a lower middle class white) was excluded. This would then make the passage sound like an invective against segregation, whereas in fact it defends segregation by claiming that society is inevitably and naturally stratified. The pronunciation of yo' [jo] for your does not have high status among white Southerners, and this may have contributed something to "Negro" judgments. On the other hand, there are a great many features, including the -sts cluster, which would have signaled "white" to listeners who know dialect differences well.

No. 8. W. McT. In the second passage with W. McT., he is heard making friendly conversation with a Negro carpenter who had just entered his office. The carpenter, dressed in blue over-alls, was addressed as "Abraham"; he in turn smiled broadly, and asked, "How's Miss Lucy, sah?" This striking bit of Uncle Tomming seemed to be accepted as routine by both parties. W. McT. was a patron of the carpenter, and claimed to have helped him get many jobs. The ex-sheriff had already spoken many times of how well he knew the Negro people, and in this passage he adopts many of the syntactic forms of Negro speech in sharp contrast to his own natural style heard in (5). The carpenter's answers are in brackets.

> Oh well, we'(re)--we fishin' up a sto(r)m down de(r)e. But of cou(r)se we lose a net an' we break a clutch an'--you gon' do that y'know. [Yeh]. Yeh....But you doin' good. [Oh yes, we doin'..] You buildin' out yonder to the Harkin' Garage. [Everything in good shape.] Yeh. Yeh. [Be surprise.] Well you can sho' build. Ain't no question 'bout that.

We expected this passage to be identified as "Afro-American" much more than No. 5. Note the regular deletion of the are in all four cases; the negative inversion (or it-deletion) of Ain't no question 'bout dat.(3.6.5); and the use of contracted gon' in place of goin' for the periphrastic future. W. McT. was plainly using his "Gullah" speech pattern. But listeners regularly identified No. 8 as Negro less than they did No. 5: this is true for the Northern and Southern Harlem adults, and for the graduate students. Only the Cobras and older Jets picked No. 8 as Negro more often, and by all other indications they are less accurate judges of dialect differences.

The only reasonable speculation as to why listeners selected No. 8 less often as Negro, is that they correctly identified the social situation. The carpenter Abraham is in the background, and cannot be heard as clearly as W. McT., but it is possible that many listeners did hear the contrast of the patronizing tone of W. McT., the white man, and the obeisant verbal shuffle of the Negro.

No. 9. B. T. is a teacher, a blonde, blue-eyed young woman from North Carolina who reads a passage from "Nobody Knows Your Name."

> Fin'ally I called her fathe(r) on the phone. I jus' made thirty three points, Miste(r) Jones. But I can' find Eleanor. Do you know where she is? Her fathe(r) said "Just a minute." Thin he said, "She says she can't come to the phone right now, son. She's watchin' the Dave Clark Five on Channel 2."

The extreme monophthongization of the North Carolina dialect is evident in Finally I, and especially prominent in Five. Note the variable r-pronunciation which is characteristic of many areas of North Carolina. There are also long, ingliding lax vowels as in son [sʌ:ən] with falling contours similar to those used by W. M. in S1 and S4 of the SR test. Some consonant clusters are simplified, but others are not; note the past tense cluster preserved in pre-consonantal position in called, and the pre-vocalic cluster in just a. The name Eleanor is pronounced in the Southern fashion, with no stress on the final syllable. The most striking characteristic of this passage is the nasality of the voice and the high intonation contours--somewhat reminiscent of those of W. M. in S1 and S4 of the SR test. The third pitch level is maintained steadily over a large part of the clause, and just before the final stress, there is an additional rise to what strikes Northerners as a fourth pitch level.

^{2}But ^{3}I can't find ^{4}Elea
nor.

^{3}She's watching the Dave Clark Fi-ive on Channel ^{4}Two-
--o.

A high percentage of informants heard B. T. as Negro--almost 50 percent in all. In this case, more Northerners marked No. 9 as Negro than Southerners--but the difference is not very great--54 as against 46 percent. It seems to follow that any Southerner will get a sizeable vote in the Negro column.

No. 14. J. D. The last white speaker in the series is an 18-year-old boy from a lower-class family, living in a low-income project on the Lower East Side of New York City. Among five brothers, he stood out as the one who rejected middle-class aspirations most strongly: he would not accept the clerical training he was being given at school, and expected to wind up as a longshoreman like his father. In the group session with his brothers and several others, he told a long story about a run-in he had with a Negro group who beat him up, and how he afterwards chased them all down and revenged himself. At one point in the narrative (not quoted in the FB test) he tells a Negro cop that some of his "bright" people" had beat him up. The cop protested that they were not his people, and J. D. quoted himself as saying "You cullud, and they yo' people." When he was finished with the story, one of J. D.'s brothers told him that "you sounded like a nigger yourself". This situation is not uncommon: a white adolescent living in hostile relations with Negroes, encountering them in fights regularly, takes on many of the linguistic features of Negro speech.[19] Since J. D. must fight as well as the Negroes to hold his own with them, they become a reference group for him. It is especially natural that he would go furthest in this direction when he was telling a story about a fight with a Negro group.

> A wen' a--ice skatin' in Jersey. [Yeh.] Come back two o'clock in the mo(r)nin'. [Yeh.] Whole bunch o'guys went--I come back, everybody say "A'm hungry, A'm hungry." I say, "I'll be right back." I go next doo(r) fo(r) pizza.... 'n they say "*Gim*me dat". I say, "Give you *what!*" ' 'e--*rrwhap!* . . . I mean I went down, 'ey kicked me, everyting--boom! I got up, 'n I ran in a house, I grabbed a steak knife an' chased 'em. Guy jumped in his ca(r), chased 'em. Bright people, you know... I'm way down 'e(r)e-- they don't take me to the hospital down 'e(r)e-- Come all the way he(r)e; I gotta come up, get my mothe(r) an' go. [You mean the police...] Yeah, I had a big hole in my mou', my nose was bleedin', my side was hurtin'; I couʔ'n' walk. *Bright people*, they take me the(r)e, they say go get you(r) mothe(r)...

The transcript does not succeed in giving the sense of urban Negro style which is felt throughout the passage, except for the few monophthongs noted for *I*. All the other segmental features are common to WNS: the stops and zero values of (th), the regular *r*-lessness, the *-in'* suffixes, the glottal stops in *couldn't*. There is a dark quality to most consonants which is quite striking, and a fast "louding" style which is characteristic of many adolescent peer groups. Strictly WNS is the preservation of the *-ed* clusters in every case: *kicked*, *grabbed*, *chased*, *jumped*, *chased*, even before consonants. Even more in the WNS manner is the use of the historical present throughout. As noted many times in this study, the historical present is not characteristic of the NNE vernacular. But we chose this passage because it had been identified as showing Negro influence, which can be felt throughout in the intonation and articulatory style, and we give the quotation above to show felt this at the time. J. D. was quite unconscious of any Negro influence in his speech, and would resent it strongly.

More than half of the subjects rated J. D. as a Negro. The graduate students were particularly strong in this respect--five out of seven did so--although only two out of seven reacted to the Southern speaker B. T. of No. 9 in this way. In general, the reaction to W. McT. in No. 5, B. T. in No. 9, and J. D. in No. 14 were all on about the same level of Negro vs. white. We can conclude that the existence of a slight Negro influence on a Northern vernacular has about the same effect on listeners as the use of a Southern vernacular without direct Negro influence. These are complementary ways of approximating Negro speech: the regional pattern vs. the social one. The fact that J. D. and the Southerners approach Negro speech from opposite sides can be seen in the fact that very few subjects rated J. D. as a Southerner--only three of the 110 members of the Harlem sample. B. T. was properly recognized as a Southerner by 16 subjects, and 23 others simply marked her as "Other white". If we add up the "Afro-American", "Other white" and "Other white/Southern" votes, we find that 90 percent fall in this category; only 10 percent heard B. T. as a member of such foreign ethnic groups as Irish, Jewish, German or Spanish. On the other hand, J. D. was called Spanish by 18 percent; and 29 per cent of the subjects used some of of these "foreign" ethnic labels for him. It follows that there is a general discrimination between the general Southern dialect usually attributed to ~~Saxon~~ Protestants, white or Negro, and urban dialects of big cities where more recent ethnic groups are found.

The Negro speakers. There were six Negro speakers in the FB test, ranging from two who seem to have no NNE characteristics at all, to D. R.'s telephone conversation which can be taken as a paradigm of the NNE vernacular.

No. 12. D. H. The speaker here is a young Negro woman living in an apartment house in the Lower East Side. Her husband was a policeman; she had graduated high school, and had the command of language and verbal style of a lower-middle-class New Yorker. She was raised on Staten Island, with almost no Negro friends. To most white New Yorkers, she sounds just like a white New Yorker. The sample passage is from a discussion about common sense, a topic about which she felt quite strongly.[20]

> I think it's kind of a matter of conditioning--because this is the kind of thing on which we learn to base our friendship with people. And--come to find out as we got older--that our friends were very few and far between--because there was always

> this little thing--*common sense*, *common sense*, and when you found *people* whose ideas did *not* especially correspond to you(r)s, right away, these people don't have common sense.

There are many phonological features typical of the lower-middle-class use of the white New York City vernacular: the high level of *r*-pronunciation in careful speech; the high level prestige forms of *th*--only a few affricates are used here. Such prestige forms are used by many adults in our Harlem sample as well. But there are also dialect features rarely used by speakers raised in NNE communities; the high (oh) in *because*, [bikʊəz], and the low back rounded nucleus [ɒːɪ] in *find* and *ideas*. The heavy stress pattern, with many primary stresses and the somewhat over-expressive formation of apical consonants (dental or blade-affricated) is also characteristic of the white New York City vernacular. On the other hand, we are unable to point to a single feature of D. H.'s speech which can be traced to NNE influence. Moreover, she has many features that positively identify her as a member of the (white) New York City speech community. Before giving the responses to this speaker, we will describe one other speaker who seemed to us to show no influence of the Negro speech community.

No. 7. H. S. The speaker is a former coal miner from Kentucky, who appears to us to have no trace of NNE influence in his speech pattern. He is a slow, careful talker, with an extremely deep voice, showing glottalization on every vowel. The *r*'s show strong retroflexion, and the prosodic pattern seems to be quite distant from NNE.

> [Sigh]. I was working up through 'ere--and so I. . the boss come around up 'ere, I told 'im, this thing's gonna fall in. An' never get all o' this. He says, "Oh no, Harry," he says, "Uh-we'd move from one section o' the mines to another." He s'd, "This top's not like 'at where you come from. This is what they call a bastard sandstone."

One can note a number of features very unlike NNE. The regular use of the contracted *is*, the historical present, and the regular [r]. There are some Southern features--for example, a slight back upglide in *fall*[fɒ^{ʊ}l] and a long ingliding vowel in *in* [ɪːən].

Of all the Negro speakers, H. S. received the minimum number of "Afro-American" ratings--21 percent from both Northerners and Southerners. The only group that showed any greater number of such ratings was the notoriously unreliable Jets. On the other hand, D. H., the Staten Island speaker, was judged Negro by 39 percent of the Harlem sample, and by three of the seven Cobras. None of the graduate students heard D. H. as a Negro. This high rate of "Negro" judgments for D. H. is hard to understand. The other female speaker of the white New York City dialect was rated Negro by only two of the 110 adults in the Harlem sample. She was in fact a white woman of Italian descent, while D. H. is a Negro. It is possible that if D. H. were placed in position No. 1 in the series that she too would receive such a low rating; and it may be that R. B. No. 1., is heavily marked as "white" in her use of high [iᵊ] in grabbed, etc; but it is also possible that there are subtle factors in D. H.'s speech characteristic of Negro speakers, which a number of Negro judges are sensitive to, but which elude white judges. In the case of H. S., there remain twenty-one percent of the Harlem sample who identified him as a Negro; and he is also in fact a Negro. The fact that no Negro speaker received less than 21 percent "Negro" judgments seems to argue that there is a residual and elusive factor of "Negro-ness" detected here.

It must be admitted that the bias of the~~se~~ investigators runs counter to this presupposition. There may indeed be some characteristic of D. H. which influences Negro speakers to judge her as a Negro, and other characteristics of H. S. which have the same effect, but it is unlikely that these have anything to do with linguistic facts, and extremely unlikely that they are the same characteristics--that a Staten Island housewife and a Kentucky coal miner have some mysterious "Negro" quality that native members of the NNE community can detect but no one else can. It seems much more likely that some subjects are reacting to real but independent features of these speakers, and that a great many others are simply making mistakes. There is a simple approach to testing the existence of an independent "Negro" quality. If those who judged H. S. a Negro and those who judged D. H. a Negro were reacting to the same features, then the two judgments were not independent. If the reasons for judging D. H. a Negro and for judging H. S. a Negro were completely independent, then the proportion who judged both to be Negroes would be (.39)(.21) = .08 of the total sample. We can also exclude anyone who judged D. H. and H. S. Negroes and also judged No. 1 to be a Negro (there is one such case). There are in fact eleven subjects who fit the necessary requirements: who judge D. H. and H. S. to be Negroes, but not R. B. This is .10 of the sample--close enough to .08 to show that these are indeed independent effects, and there is no "Negro-ness" involved here.

No. 10. Dan Watts. This is an extract from a radio speech made by Mr. Watts, a radical Negro spokesman who was raised in a Northern Negro community and who, like most other Harlem leaders, uses a grammar very close to SE.

> Why should he turn to me now an' say, I want to share pa(r)t of my good fortune with you. He has

> no reason to. An' I think it's--reminds me of the--you know, when we were kids--the boy with all the ma(r)bles is not gonna change the rules of the game.

The speaker's variable (r) is characteristic of educated Negro speech as well as educated white speech in New York City, and this is also the case with his consistent use of fricative th. There is one very "Southern" monophthongal /ay/ in reminds, but there are also many features of Northern speech in this passage. The voice quality and prosodic features do not seem to us to have a marked Negro character. The content of the passage may indeed be heard as the position of a Negro spokesman who is arguing for violent change.

There are a fairly large number of Harlem subjects who rated Dan Watts as "Negro: 37 percent. Again, if one argues that there is a feature of "Negro" speech common to Dan Watts and also to the other two we have just discussed, then the choices of the "Afro-American" category for all three are not three independent events. Now if we take the eleven who rated D. H. and H. S. both as Negro, any dependency between these choices and that of Dan Watts as Negro should yield more than (.10)(.37) = .04 of the sample. But of these eleven, only five subjects judged Dan Watts a Negro, which is very close to the .04 percent we would expect if these were independent efforts.

It can also be seen that this independence of the choices argues against the presence of any generalized skill at judging ethnic backgrounds. It seems as if most of the "correct" judgments of the last three speakers are due to poor judgment on the part of the subjects rather than good judgment.

No. 11. J. McG. The speaker is an older Negro man, raised in New York City, who received only a grade school education and worked as a guard at the Y.M.C.A, but did a great deal of reading on his own, in later life. He shows features of the careful speech of the older, Northern Negro community:

> First thing you do, "Eh Joe, there's a fellow up on the--fou(r)th floo(r), actin' funny. He's chased somebody out the hall...think he'd got a gun in 'e(r)e." I said, "Where?" "On the fou(r)th floo(r)." I says, "All right." So they give me the room number. I happened to know who it was, you know.

Later in this story of the danger of death J. McG. suddenly switched to a completely different voice to imitate the trouble-maker, with all of the features of a strongly Southern NNE. It eventually appeared that the man he was imitating was "a Hungarian," but NNE was the only non-standard dialect that J. McG. controlled, and he unconsciously substituted this for the uneducated foreign speech that he had in fact heard [reported in detail in Labov 1965]. This unconscious switch illustrates the underlying linguistic attitudes of J. McG. which oppose the SE pattern he aims at himself to the uneducated NNE form against which he is reacting. In the passage quoted above, he uses some *r*-pronunciation, and a high percentage of standard fricatives for (th). Some older vernacular forms survive, such as *out the hall* (see CC Tests for this idiom, 4.4). But most of his grammar is not NNE: for example, *He's chased*, *I says*, and *they give me* are more typical of white colloquial forms than of NNE. It must be remembered that most members of our Harlem sample have departed considerably from the NNE vernacular in their own casual speech, so that forms such as these do not necessarily mark J. McG. as different from most of the UWC speakers who are acting as judges.

It is interesting to note that only 37 percent of the Harlem adults judged J. McG. to be a Negro, no more than Dan Watts or D. H., although he seems to us to have many more of the vocal and prosodic features of the Negro speech community.

No. 6. D. R. The last two items to be considered are both passages spoken by D. R. She is a 40-year-old woman, born in North Carolina, who was working in New York City and living on the Lower East Side. She had graduated high school, and had fairly good command of standard English. In the passage quoted below, she is talking to a white interviewer about common sense.

> Smart?--Well, I mean, when you use the word *intelligent* an' *smart* I mean--you use it in the same sense? [I don't know, I want to know how you use it.] (Laughs) So some people are pretty witty--I mean--yet they'(r)e not so intelligent!

The *r*-pronunciation of this passage is almost consistent, and there is only one non-standard *th*-- in *they're*. The vowel in *when* is raised to [ɪ˅]. The laugh is genially "white"-- a very distinct series of *ha*-*ha*-*ha*'s. Still, the prosodic features and voice quality of D. R. strongly indicate the Negro speech community for those familiar with it, in ways that are difficult to specify with our present knowledge.

No. 13. In the midst of the interview with D. R., the telephone rang. A new tape had just been put on the machine, and D. R. was wearing the lavaliere microphone. The interviewer went into the other room with D. R.'s nephew, and began to ask him questions. In the meantime, D. R. carried on a long telephone conversation with a close friend of hers, and her friend's husband; D. R. had just come back from North Carolina, where she had been taking care of some young children during her father's sickness, and she had a great deal of family gossip to talk over. This document is by far the most natural and intimate piece of conversation that we have ever recorded in any community. No detailed analysis could convey the strong impression of the vernacular which one obtains from listening to this extract:

> Huh?. . . Yeah, go down 'e(r)e to stay. This is. So you know what Carol Ann say? Listen at what Carol Ann say. Carol Ann say, "An then when papa die, we can come back (belly laugh). . . (falsetto) Ain't these chillun sumpm? . . . An' when papa die, can we come back. . .(laughs).

The laughter of this passage is very different from that of No. 6: it is a full-bodied performance which begins low and ends high, shaking from somewhere down deep. The voice quality and vocal personality of the speaker are altogether different from No. 6, and the intonation contours are completely opposed. In fact, the performance is so typically NNE that it embarrassed many of our subjects, who shifted in their chairs as they heard it. They assumed, naturally, that it was a performance done to order for the tape recorder; and for anyone to use the intimate family style of NNE in such a public situation is clearly a mark of "Tomming" it up. They could not know, of course, that D. R. did not realize at the time that she was being recorded, and that she assumed that the conversation she heard from the other room was the interview proper.

Though No. 6 is D. R.'s careful speech, there seem to be many small aspects of voice quality which mark D. R. as a member of the Negro speech community. Because she uses a fairly standard grammar and phonology in this passage, many white people feel that she is not a Negro, but most Negro subjects judge her to be Negro. Thus 83 percent of the Harlem sample judged No. 6 to be a Negro speaker. But 94 percent--all but six, judged D. R. to be a Negro in No. 13. We can only argue that these six are irreducibly confused. Only three of the seven graduate students identified D. R. as a Negro in No. 6, but all did so in No. 13. The Jets and Cobras do not do particularly well on either 6 or 13, and we are forced to conclude that they simply do not have the ability for this test. It can hardly be a question of reluctance or impatience, for this preceded the Job scale on the SR test on which the Cobras did so well.

4.7.4. Conclusion. The over-all impression that one obtains from the FB Tests is that the responses are not as clear or precise as the SR Tests. In this respect they resemble such self-report tests as the VC Test (4.5) or the self-report tests of SSENYC. Such responses are typical of tests in which the norms do not match his behavior pattern. Among the sociolinguistic abilities which people have, we can include the ability to shift styles in appropriate contexts, and to judge the speech of others in terms of distance from the self or from the prestige SE norms. But members of a speech community do not have a generalized ability to report their own speech, or to judge the ethnic background of speakers accurately. They do have the ability to recognize speech patterns which are clearly representative of dialects which they have been much exposed to. Thus it is wrong to approach the test results in terms of whether the speakers were in fact Negro or white. Rather we should judge responses in terms of whether the family backgrounds named fit the speech forms being used in terms of social norms or social stereotypes. A Negro raised in a white community would properly be judged as "white" in this sense.

With this point of view in mind, let us re-examine the performance of the seven graduate students as given on Table 4-17. On the zero pattern, they properly judged all four speakers to be white. In the main body of the test, they showed no clear agreement for the four white speakers, though a majority reacted to the lower-class white J. D. as Negro. But these four were all selected as difficult cases, quite unlike the sentences of the SR test which were chosen for the clarity with which they exemplified plus or minus values of the variables.

For the three Negro speakers who were raised in a white community or were using strictly standard English, there were twenty-one judgments made by the graduate students: only one of these was "Afro-American". On the other hand, all seven rated D. R.'s family style No. 13 as Negro, the only item on which all agreed. It follows that these graduate students did demonstrate the ability to agree on the well-formed social patterns that they know, but not to judge more complex cases: with mixed cases, one gets mixed results. The fact that a given speaker has only one ethnic family background does not mean that there is a single stimulus, for it is his dialect and not his ethnicity that is being judged.

The over-all percentage of "correct" judgments in terms of correctly identifying Negro or white ethnic backgrounds would be:

	white speakers	Negro speakers
Harlem adults	40	44
Graduate students	61	30
Cobras	65	29
Jets	66	38

No one group does very much better than any other in the long run. But if we take the five "clear" cases:

No.		ethnic background	speech form
1	R.B.	white	white
12	D.H.	Negro	white
7	H.S.	Negro	white
10	W.D.	Negro	white
13	D.R.	Negro	Negro

We then obtain the following over-all percentage of correct identification of speech forms:

Graduate students	97
Harlem adults	79
Cobras	79
Jets	72

This pattern is very much like the results of the SR test, and it reflects the same kind of sociolinguistic competence. We can conclude that it is the ability to recognize the clear cases of dialects one knows which is being registered in the FB tests, rather than any general ability to identify the ethnic background of speakers.

4.8 Narrative analysis

The Central Harlem studies used a number of techniques designed to overcome the constraints of the face-to-face interview, and to elicit long sections of casual and spontaneous speech. The most effective of these produced narratives of personal experience. We thus found ourselves in a position to compare the verbal skills of speakers of various ages in a set of parallel texts. A general framework for the analysis of narrative was developed (Labov and Waletzky, 1966) which shows how verbal skills are used to evaluate events in ways specific to the speaker's cultural set; and within this framework we observed the gradual development with age of the ability to use complex syntactic devices for such evaluation. The study of narrative was selected as the basis for systematic comparison of skills in the use of language and to analyze differential development in the use of language which throws light on functional interference between the cultures involved.

The questions which developed narratives were embedded in the section on fighting, and on fate and the danger of death.

1. Were you ever in a situation where you were in serious danger of being killed--where you said to yourself--this is it? (TA HIP form: Were you ever in a bag where you were up tight and almost blew your life?)

2. What was the worst (best) fight you ever saw? (TA HIP form: What was the best rumble you were ever in?)

3. Did you ever get in a fight with a guy bigger than you? What happened?

The first question was most effective with adults, the second set with adolescents, but there is enough overlap to allow us to compare verbal skills in the same area. For pre-adolescents, some of the most extensive material came from questions on favorite television shows (the man from U.N.C.L.E. was dominant in the summer of 1965); these narratives of vicarious experience provide a sharp contrast with other narratives of personal experience.

In this discussion we will deal first with the general definition of narrative, (4.8.1), with its over-all structure (4.8.2), with the types of evaluation, and embedding in the narrative structure (4.8.3), with the basic syntax of narrative clauses and the sources of syntactic complexity (4.8.4), and finally with the use of complex syntactic devices in evaluating ~~of~~ narratives and the gradual development with age of the ability to use such devices (4.8.5). The principal body of material which we will use consists of narratives extracted from interviews in various rural and urban areas, with white and Negro subjects, centering about narratives from PA, TA and Ad Interviews in South Central Harlem.

4.8.1. Definition of narrative. We define narrative as one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred. For example, a preadolescent narrative:

(1) This boy punched me
and I punched him
and the teacher came in
and stopped the fight.

An adult narrative:

(2) Well this person had a little too much to drink
and he attacked me
and the friend came in
and she stopped it.

In each case we have four independent clauses which match the order of the inferred events. It is important to note that other means of recapitulating these experiences are available which do not follow the same sequence; syntactic embedding can be used:

(3) A friend of mine came in
just in time to stop
this person who had a little too much to drink
from attacking me.

Or else the past perfect can be used to reverse the order:

(4) The teacher stopped the fight.
She had just come in
I had punched this boy.
He had punched me.

Narrative, then, is only one way of recapitulating this past experience: the clauses are characteristically ordered in temporal sequence; if narrative clauses are reversed, the inferred temporal sequence of the original semantic interpretation is altered: I punched this boy / and he punched me instead of This boy punched me / and I punched him.

With this conception of narrative, we can define a minimal narrative as a sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered: that is, a change in their order will result in a change in the temporal sequence of the original semantic interpretation. In alternative terminology, there is temporal juncture between the two clauses, and a minimal narrative defined as one containing a single temporal juncture.

The skeleton of a narrative then consists of a series of temporally ordered clauses which we may call narrative clauses. A narrative such as (1) or (2) consists entirely of narrative clauses. Here is a minimal narrative which contains only two:

(5) a I know a boy name Harry.
b Another boy threw a bottle at him right in the head.
c and he had to get seven stitches.
[12, VDC, #377].

This narrative contains three clauses, but only two are narrative clauses. The first has no temporal juncture, and might be placed after b or after c without disturbing temporal order. It is equally true at the end and at the beginning that the narrator knows a boy named Harry . Clause a may be called a free clause since it is not confined by any temporal juncture.

It will also be useful to introduce the concept of a displacement set. With each clause is associated a set of other clauses (including itself) with which it may be exchanged or perturbed without disturbing the temporal sequence of the original semantic interpretation. Free clauses have displacement sets equivalent to the entire narrative. Narrative clauses have more restricted sets--which extend to but do not include the preceding and following narrative clause. Sometimes a number of clauses will seem to contain a narrative, but closer inspection shows that they contain no narrative juncture, and that they are not in fact narratives in this sense. For example, the following material was given in answer to the Danger of Death question by a member of the Inwood TA group:

(6) (You ever been in a situation where you thought you were gonna get killed?)
Oh, Yeah, lotta time, man.
(Like,what happened?)
a Well, like we used to jump off the trestle
b and the trestle's about six-seven stories high.
c You know, we used to go swimmin' there....
d We used to jump offa there, you know.
e An' uh--like, wow! Ya get up there
f An' ya feel like you are gonna die and shit,y'know.
g Couple a times I almost...I thought I was gonna drown, you know. [Kevin, 16, #708]

Because all of these clauses refer to general events, which have occurred an indefinite number of times, it is not possible to falsify the situation by reversing clauses. Clauses f and g refer to ordered events on any one occasion, but since they are in the general present they refer to an indefinite number of occasions, so that it is the case that some g followed some f. Clauses containing used to, would and the general present are not narrative clauses, and cannot support a narrative.

It is also the case that subordinate clauses do not serve as narrative clauses. Once a clause is subordinated to another, it is not possible to disturb the original semantic interpretation by reversing it. Thus

(7) a If you didn't bring her candy to school
she would punch you in the mouth.
b And you had to kiss her
when she'd tell you.

contains two sets of events, each of which is in fact temporally ordered: first you didn't bring the candy, then she would punch you; first the girl told you, and then you kissed her, not the other way around. But this is not signalled by the order of the clauses: (7') does not disturb this interpretation:

(7') a' She would punch you in the mouth
if you didn't bring her candy to school,
b' and when she'd tell you
you had to kiss her.

It is only independent clauses which can function as narrative clauses--and as we will see below, only particular kinds of independent clauses. In the representation of narratives in this section, we will follow the practice of listing each clause on a separate line, but letter only the independent clauses. The internal syntax of the individual clauses will be the focus of 4.9.4 and 4.9.5; for the moment we will consider the clauses as a whole, classified as narrative clauses, and free clauses. There are also restricted clauses, which have displacement sets that range over some narrative clauses, but not over the entire narrative. The relative arrangement of these clauses is the aspect of narrative analysis considered in Labov and Waletzky 1966: we will deal with this only briefly before proceeding to the internal structure.

Before discussing the structure of narratives as a whole, we will give the full text of four longer narratives of NNE speakers. We will refer to these narratives for further illustration of structural matters, and also take them up as models of excellence in this particular verbal skill.

There are no objective measures of such excellence: but the tellers of these stories are highly regarded by their own group, and in the course of discussion with many observers, there has been general agreement that those cited below are very good narratives indeed. We will also give enough of the context of each narrative so that one can see the immediate reason for telling it--an essential factor in understanding the "point" of the narrative in the discussion to follow. The interviewer's remarks will always be in parentheses. We first cite a narrative of Boot, the verbal leader of the Thunderbirds who has figured heavily in many discussions of verbal skills in 4.2.3 and elsewhere.

(8) (Something Calvin did that was really wild?)
Yeah.

a It was on a Sunday
b And we didn't have nothin' to do
after I--after we came from church
c Then we ain't had nothin' to do.

d So I say, "Calvin, let's go get our--out our dirty
clothes on and play in the dirt."
e And so Calvin say, "Let's have a rock--a rock war."
f And I say, "All right."
g So Calvin had a rock.
h And we as--you know, here go a wall
i and a far away here go a wall.
j Calvin th'ew a rock.
k I was lookin' and-- uh -
l And Calvin th'ew a rock.
m It oh--it almost hit me.
n And so I looked down to get another rock;
o Say "Ssh!"
p An' it pass me.
q I say, "Calvin I'm bust your head for dat."
r Calvin stuck his head out.
s I th'ew the rock

t An' the rock went up,
u I mean--went up--
v came down,
w an' say [slap!]
x an' smacked him in the head

y an' his head busted. [Boot, 12, T-Birds #365]

One of the best adolescent narrators is Larry H., one of the verbal leaders of the Jets 100's block. (and a member of the hang-out group called "The Six Best Fighters"). We have had many occasions to quote Larry in this chapter. In his single interviews he told three outstanding stories. One was reproduced in 4.1.5; the third may indeed be his best.

(9) a An' then, three weeks ago I had a fight with this other dude outside.
b He got mad
'cause I wouldn't give him a cigarette.
c Ain't that a bitch?

(Oh yeah?)
d Yeah, you know, I was sittin' on the corner an' shit,
smokin' my cigarette, you know
e I was high, an' shit.

f He walked over to me,
g "Can I have a cigarette?"
h He was a little taller than me,
but not that much.
i I said, "I ain't got no more, man",
'cause, you know, all I had was one left.
j An' I ain't gon' give up my last cigarette
k unless I got some more.
l So I said, "I don't have no more, man."
m So he, you know, dug on the pack,
'cause the pack was in my pocket.
n So he said, "Eh man, I can't get a cigarette, man?
o I man--I mean we supposed to be brothers, an' shit."
p So I say, "Yeah, well, you know, man, all I got is one, you dig it?"
q An' I won't give up my las' one to nobody.
r So you know, the dude, he looks at me,
s An' he--
I 'on' know--
t he jus' thought he gon' rough that motherfucker up.
u He said, "I can't get a cigarette."
v I said, "Tha's what I said, my man".
w You know, so he said, "What you supposed to be bad, an shit?
x What, you think you bad an' shit?"
y So I said, "Look here, my man,
z I don't think I'm bad, you understand?
aa But I mean, you know, if I had it, you could git it
bb I like to see you with it, you dig it?
cc But the sad part about it,
dd You got to do without it.
ee That's all, my man".[21]

ff So the dude, he 'on' to pushin' me, man.
(Oh he pushed you?)
gg An' why he do that?
hh Everytime somebody fuck with me,
why they do it?
ii I put that cigarette down,
jj An' boy, let me tell you,
kk I beat the shit outa that motherfucker.

ll I tried to kill 'im--over one cigarette!
mm I tried to kill 'im. Square business!
nn After I got through stompin' him in the face,man,
oo You know, all of a sudden I went crazy!
pp I jus' went crazy.
qq An' I jus' wouldn't stop hittin the motherfucker.
rr Dig it, I couldn't stop hittin' 'im, man.
till the teacher pulled me off o' him.

ss An' guess what?
tt After all that I gave the dude the cigarette,
after all that.
uu Ain't that a bitch?
(How come you gave 'im a cigarette?)
vv I 'on' know.
ww I jus' gave it to him.
xx An' he smoked it, too!
[Larry, 16, Jets #560]

Among the young adults whom we interviewd, J. L. struck us immediately as a gifted story teller; the following is one of many narratives he told us which have been regarded very highly by many listeners.

(10) (What was the most important fight that you remember, one that sticks in your mind...)

a Well, one [I think] was with a girl.
b Like I was a kid, you know,
c And she was the baddest girl, the baddest girl in the neighborhood.
d If you didn't bring her candy to school,
she would punch you in the mouth;
e And you had to kiss her
when she'd tell you.
f This girl was only about 12 years old, man,
g but she was a killer.
h She didn't take no junk;
i She whupped all her brothers.

j And I came to school one day
k and I didn't have no money.

l My ma wouldn't give me no money.

m And I played hookies one day,
n [She] put something on me [She hit me good].
o I played hookies, man,
p so I said, you know,
q I'm not gonna play hookies no more
'cause I don't wanna get a whupping.

r So I go to school
s and this girl says, "Where's the candy?"
t I said, "I don't have it."
u She says, powwww!
v So I says to myself,
w There's gonna be times my mother won't give me money
because [we're] a poor family
x And I can't take this all, you know,
every time she don't give me any money.
y So I say, "Well, I just gotta fight this girl.
z She gonna hafta whup me.
aa I hope she don't whup me."
bb And I hit the girl: powwww!
cc and I put something on it.
dd I win the fight.
ee That was one of the most important.

[J. L.,26, Trenton, #311]

The second adult narrative given here was told by an older man, a 57-year-old retired postman living on the Lower East Side.

(11) (Were you ever in a situation where you were in serious danger of being killed?)
a My brother put a knife in my head.
(How'd that happen?)
b Like kids, you get into a fight
c and I twisted his arm up behind him.

d This was just a few days after my father had died,
e and we were sitting shive.

f And the reason the fight started--
g He sort of ran out in the yard--
h this was out on Coney Island--
i and he started ‿ talk about it.
j And my mother had just sat down to have a cup of coffee.
k And I told him to cut it out.
l Course kids, you know--he don't hafta listen to me.

m So that's when I grabbed him by the arm,
n and twisted it up behind him.

o When I let go his arm,
p there was a knife on the table,
q he just picked it up
r and he let me have it.
s And I started to bleed like a pig.

t And naturally, first thing was--run to the doctor.
u And the doctor just says, "Just about this much more," he says,
"and you'd a been dead."

[Jacob S., L.E.S., #200]

4.8.2. The over-all structure of narrative. Some narratives, like (1) contain only narrative clauses; they are complete in the sense that they have a beginning, a middle and an end. But there are other elements of narrative structure found in more fully developed types. Briefly, a fully-formed narrative may show the following:

1. Abstract.
2. Orientation.
3. Complicating action.
4. Evaluation.
5. Result or resolution.
6. Coda.

Of course there are complex chainings and embeddings of these elements, but here we are dealing with the simpler forms. Complicating action has been characterized in 4.8.1. and the result may be regarded for the moment as the termination of that series of events. Here we will consider briefly the nature and function of the abstract, orientation, coda, and evaluation.

The abstract. It is not uncommon for narrators to begin with one or two clauses summarizing the whole story.

(12) (Were you ever in a situation where you thought you were in serious danger of being killed?)

I talked a man out of--Old Doc Simon I talked him out of pulling the trigger. [74, Iowa, #001]

When this story is heard, it can be seen that the abstract does encapsulate the point of the story. In (11) we see a sense of two abstracts:

(11) (Were you ever in a situation where you were in serious danger of being killed?)

a My brother put a knife in my head.
(How'd that happen?)
b Like kids, you get into a fight
c and I twisted his arm up behind him.
d This was just a few days after my father died....

Here the speaker gives one abstract, and follows it with another after the interviewer's question. Then without further prompting, he begins the narrative proper. The narrative might just as well have begun with the free clause *d*; *b* and *c* in this sense are not absolutely required, since they cover the same ground as the narrative as a whole. Larry's narrative (10) above is the third of a series of three, so that no question occurs just before the narrative itself. But there is a well-formed abstract:

(9) a An' then, three weeks ago I had a fight with
this other dude outside.
b He got mad
'cause I wouldn't give him a cigarette.
c Ain't that a bitch?

Larry does not give the abstract in *place* of the story; he has no intention of stopping there, but goes on to give the full account.

What then is the function of the abstract? It is not an advertisement or a warning: the narrator does not wait for the listener to say, "I've heard about that", or "Don't tell me that now". If the abstract covers the same ground as the story, what does it add? We will consider this further in considering the evaluation section below.

Orientation. At the outset, it is necessary to identify in some way the time, place, persons and their activity or the situation. This can be done in the course of the first several narrative clauses, but more commonly there is an orientation section composed of free clauses. In Boot's narrative (8), clause *a* sets the time (*Sunday*); clause *b* the persons (*we*), the situation (*nothin' to do*) and further specifies the time (*after we came from church*). The first narrative clause follows. In Larry's narrative (9), some information is already available in the abstract (the time--*three weeks ago*; the place--outside (of school); and the persons--*this other dude* and *Larry*). The orientation section then begins with a detailed picture of the situation--*Larry sittin' on the corner*, *high*.

Many of J. L.'s narratives begin with an elaborate portrait of the main character--in this case, clauses *a-i* are all devoted to the baddest girl in the neighborhood, and the first narrative clause brings J. L. and the girl face to face in the schoolyard.

It is quite common to find a great many past progressive clauses in the orientation section--sketching the kind of thing that was going on before the first event of the narrative occurred, or during the entire episode. In (11), clauses _d_ and _e_ form an orientation section: _and we were sitting shive_. Then the narrative begins with a pseudo-flashback approach, going back in time to the origin of the fight, and bringing it up in clauses _f-l_ to the moment of the first abstract. But these are narrative clauses which take their orientation from _d-e_. The most interesting thing about orientation is its placement. It is theoretically possible for all free orientation clauses to be placed at the beginning of the narrative, but in practice, we find much of this material is placed at strategic points later on, for reasons to be examined below.

Coda. There are also free clauses to be found at the ends of narratives. For example, (10) ends:

(10) ee That was one of the most important.

This clause forms the _coda_ to narrative (10). It is one of the many options open to the narrator for signalling that the narrative is finished. We find many similar forms.

(13) And that was that.

(14) And that--that was it, you know.

Codas may also contain general observations or show the effects of the events on the narrator. At the end of one fight narrative, we have

(15) I was given the rest of the day off.
And ever since then I haven't seen the guy
'cause I quit,
I quit, you know.
No more problems.

Some codas which strike us as particularly skillful are strangely disconnected from the main narrative. One New Jersey woman told a story about the time she almost drowned as a girl, until a man came along and stood her on her feet--the water was only four feet deep.

(16) And you know that man who picked me out of the water?
He's a detective in Union City
And I see him every now and again.

These codas (15-16) have the property of bridging the gap between the moment of time at the end of the narrative proper and the present. They bring the narrator and the listener back to the point at which they entered the narrative. There are many ways of doing this: in (16), the other main actor is brought up to the present; in (15), the narrator. But there is a more general function of codas which subsumes both the examples of (15-16) and the simpler forms of (13-14). Codas close off the sequence of complicating actions and clearly indicate that there were no more events following that were relevant to thse. A chain of actions may be thought of as successive answers to the question "Then what happened?" "And then what happened?" After a coda such as That was that, the question "Then what happened?" is properly answered, "Nothing; I just told you what happened." It is even more obvious that one cannot ask "And then what happened?" after the more complex codas of (15) and (16) and expect any more information on the narrative itself. "Then" has now been shifted to the present, so that "what happened then?" can only be interpreted as a question about the present; the answer is "Nothing; here I am." Thus it can be seen that the "disjunctive" codas of (15) and (16) have great effectiveness, in that they prevent further questions pertaining to the narrative itself: the narrative events are pushed away and sealed off.

The coda can thus be seen as one means of solving the serious problem of indicating the end of a "turn" at speaking. As Harvey Sacks has pointed out, a sentence is an optimal unit for the utterance, in that the listener's syntactic competence is employed in a double sense--to let him know when the sentence is complete, and also when it is his turn to talk. Narratives require other means for the narrator to signal the fact that he is beginning a long series of sentences which will form one "turn", and to mark the end of that sequence. Many of the devices we have been discussing here are best understood in terms of how the speaker and the listener let each other know whose turn it is to talk. Traditional folk tales and fairy tales have fixed formulas which do this at the beginning and the end, but these are not available for personal narratives. It must also be said that a good coda seems to provide more than a mechanical solution for the sequencing problem: it leaves the listener with a feeling of satisfaction and completeness--that matters have been rounded off and accounted for.

Evaluation. Beginnings, middles and ends of narratives have been noted in many accounts of folklore or narrative. But there is one important aspect of narrative which has not been discussed--perhaps the most important element in addition to the basic narrative clause. That is what we term the evaluation of the narrative: the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative, its raison d'etre, why it was told, and what the narrator is getting at. There are many ways to tell the same story to make very different points, or to make no point at all. Pointless stories are met (in English) with the withering rejoinder, "So what?" Every good narrator is continually warding off this question; when his narrative is over, it must be unthinkable for a by-stander to say, "So what?" Instead, the appropriate remark would be, "He did?" or similar means of registering the reportable character of the events of the narrative (2.5)

To underline the difference between evaluated and unevaluated narrative, it will be helpful to look at some narratives of vicarious experience, and oppose them to narratives of personal experience by the members of the same group and age range. Accounts of favorite television programs fall under the head of vicarious experience. During the period of the VDC interviews, the favorite television program for NNE youngsters was "The Man from U.N.C.L.E."

(17) a This kid--Napoleon got shot
b and he had to go on a mission.
c And so this kid, he went with Solo.
d So they went
e And this guy--they went through this window,
f and they caught him.
g And then he beat up them other people.
h And they went
i and then he said
    that this old lady was his mother
j and then he--and at the end he say
    that he was the guy's friend.

[Carl, 11, VDC, #386]

This is typical of many such narratives we obtained. It is true that there is no orientation section to identify the persons, places and situations, but such information can be missing without **producing** the effect of utter meaninglessness characteristic of (17). It is the absence of any evaluation on the part of the narrator which gives it this character. Vicarious experience is not evaluated; here is another such narrative--in this case, the account of the last cartoon seen on a favorite television show.

(18) (What was the story about?)
About this pig.
(What happened?)

a See he--they threw him out, you know.
b So he wanted to get back in,
    'cause, you know, it was sn--raining hard.
c So he got on this boat
d and tried to--go somewhere else.
e And the boat went over.
f And he tried to swim.
g So this other man was fishing in the rain.
h So he seen the pig,

i and went over there,
j and picked the pig up
k and put it in the boat
l and brought it back to shore,
m so he would land there.
n And that was that.
[Eddie, 11, Cobras #483]

(18) may be more coherent than (17) but it is equally pointless. We may compare this with a story of personal experience told by a boy of the same age from the VDC series of interviews:

(19) a When I was in fourth grade--
no, it was in third grade--
b This boy he stole my glove.
c He took my glove
d and said that his father found it downtown on the ground.
(And you fight him?)
e I told him that it was impossible for him to find downtown
'cause all those people were walking by
and just his father was the only one
that found it?
f So he got all [mad].

g Then I fought him.
h I knocked him all out in the street.
i So he say he give.
j and I kept on hitting him.
k Then he started crying
l and ran home to his father

m And the father told him
o that he didn't find no glove.

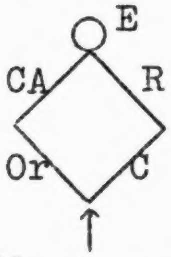
[Norris W., V.D.C., 11, #378]

This narrative is just the opposite of (17) and (18) in its high degree of evaluation--it is veritably drenched in evaluation. Every line, and almost every element of the syntax contributes to the point, and that point is self-aggrandizement, as with almost all NNE fight narratives. Each element of the narrative is designed to make Norris look good, and ~~the~~ "this boy" look bad. We can give a kind of ethical paraphrase which interprets these evaluative points in terms of the underlying value system of NNE which is required to understand the narrative.

Norris knew that this boy stole his glove--had the nerve to just walk off with it and then make up a big story to claim that it was his. Norris didn't lose his cool and start swinging; first he destroyed this impossible fabrication by his relentless logic, so that everyone could see how phony the boy was. Then this boy lost *his* head and got mad and started fighting. Norris beat him up, but Norris was so outraged at the phony way this kid had acted that he didn't stop when the kid surrendered--Norris "went crazy" see (11) above--and just kept hitting him. Then this punk started crying, and like a baby ran home to his father. Then his father--his *very own father* told him that his story didn't hold water.

The story then presents a picture of Norris as cool, logical, strong in insisting on his own right, a good fighter who "goes crazy" if someone has really insulted him. [Many NNE narrators claim that in the midst of a fight they "go crazy" and "don't know what they do"---it is a prestige claim, since these are in fact the most dangerous kinds of fighters--see Larry's narrative (9)] On the other hand, his opponent is shown as dishonest, clumsy in argument, unable to control his temper, a poor fighter and a coward. In terms of the NNE value system, no one would listen to this story and say "So what?" It is a narrative that effectively bars this question.

In the next two sub-sections we will examine in detail the way in which clause order, and the internal structure of the clause, carries out this evaluative function, and we will re-examine Norris's narrative with this in mind. We can sum up this portrait of the sections of the over-all organization of narrative with the following schematic diagram:



The narrative begins with an orientation, proceeds to the complicating action; the action is then usually suspended at the key point of evaluation before (or while proceeding to) the result. The coda then returns the listener to the temporal starting point from which he began.

We can also look at narrative as a series of answers to underlying questions:

a. Abstract: what was this about?

b. Orientation: who, when, what where?

c. Complicating action: then what happened?

d. **Evaluation: so what?**

e. **Result: what finally happened?**

Only c, the complicating action, is essential if we are to recognize a narrative, as pointed out in 4.8.1. The abstract, the orientation and evaluation answer questions which relate to the function of effective narrative: the first three to clarify the referential functions, the last to answer the functional question--why was the story told in the first place? The coda is not given in answer to any such question, and as such it is found less frequently than any other element of the narrative. The coda puts off a question--it signals that questions c and d are no longer relevant.

4.8.3. Types of evaluation. There are a great many ways in which the point of a narrative can be conveyed--ways in which the speaker signals to the listener why he is telling it. To identify the evaluative portion of a narrative, it is necessary to know why this narrative--or any narrative--is felt to be tellable; in other words, why the events of the narrative are reportable in the sense of section 2.5.

Most of the narratives cited here concern matters that are always reportable: the danger of death or of physical injury. These matters occupy a high place on an unspoken agenda which is always present whenever people are speaking. It is always relevant to say (at least in peacetime)"I just saw a man killed on the street." No one will answer such a remark with "So what?" If on the other hand, someone says, "I skidded on the bridge and nearly went off," someone else can say, "So what? that happens to me every time I cross it." In other words, if the event becomes common enough, it is no longer a violation of a type II rule of behavior, and is not reportable. The narrators of most of these stories were under social pressure to show that the events involved were truly dangerous and unusual, or that someone else really broke the normal rules in an outrageous and reportable way. Evaluative devices say to us: this was terrifying, dangerous, weird, wild, crazy; or amusing, hilarious, wonderful; more generally, that it was strange, uncommon or unusual--that is, worth reporting. It was not ordinary, plain, humdrum, every-day or run-of-the-mill. One does not begin a story saying, "Let me tell you what happened to me just now: the most ordinary thing that ever happened in my life." This concept of reportability is rooted in the rule typology outlined in 2.5; without it, we cannot begin to understand the things that people do in telling narratives.

In this sub-section we will consider briefly some of the large-scale, external mechanisms, and then turn to a more detailed examination of the syntactic devices within the clause which carry out this function.

External evaluation. The narrator can stop the narrative, turn to the listener, and tell him what the point is. This is a common characteristic of middle class narrators, who interrupt the course of the narrative to do this. For example, a lower-middle-class secretary living on the Lower East Side told a long story about an airplane trip from Mexico City. She frequently interrupted the narrative with such comments as

(21) gg and it was the strangest feeling
because you couldn't tell
if they were really gonna make it
hh if they didn't make it,
it was such a small little plane,
there was no chance for anybody.
:
xxx But it was really quite terrific
yyy it was only a half-hour's ride to Mexico City
:
aaaa But it was quite an experience.

Other narrators would be content to let the narrative itself convey this information to the listener--to give them the experience. Again, a sixteen-year-old girl from a lower-middle-class family on the Lower East Side interrupts her story of a bad skid on a wet road in the mountains to say:

(22) And it is a very, very frightening situation.

Such external evaluation is quite common in therapeutic interviews, where it may form the main substance of an hour's discussion. The narratives themselves may serve only as a framework for the evaluation.

There are a number of intermediate steps in providing external evaluation for a narrative which do not overtly break the flow of narrative clauses. The simplest is to attribute an evaluative remark to yourself at that moment. Thus an elderly working-class Jewish woman from the East Side told about a time she had a bad fall in the street.

(23) l and my head opened up
m and there was nobody there
n 'n I thought that was the end of me
o and I picked everything up
p and I started to run towards Henry Street.

A Negro woman raised in North Carolina was telling about a near-accident on the roads on her way to a funeral:

(24) j I just closed my eyes
k I said, "O my God, here it is!"

But feeling that the full reason for her fright would escape the listener, she steps out of the narrative to explain what was in her mind with this more external evaluation:

(25) l Well, 'cause you have heard of people
going to a funeral
and getting killed themselves
before they got there
m and that is the first thing
that came to my mind.

Embedding of evaluation. One can embed the evaluation somewhat deeper into the narrative by making it something said at the time to one of the other actors.

A working-class Jewish woman living in the Lower East Side told of a violent scene in which her father threatened her with a knife. Her father took the cake that she had bought for a party held for one of the girls at her factory who was getting married.

(26) q and then he wanted to take half of the cake,
you know.
r and then I said, "Look what you're doing.
s It's not mine!"
t He said, "I'm not interested in the girls in
your factory,"
u He says, "I'm more interesting in having some
for myself, you know?"
v So I was very upset
w and I said, "I don't think that's right at all."

Here clause *v* is not addressed to the listener, but made as a straight narrative statement, and clause *w* represents her moral evaluation of the situation embedded as a dramatic event. At the end of the narrative, in what is in effect the Coda, she addresses her evaluative remarks directly to the listener, but here it forms a Coda and appropriately brings listener and narrator out of the narrative situation. At the end, she added

kkk and he was sorry
that it even started
lll but like I was trying to bring out
parents are that way
mmm they get into some of these fits once in a while
and then they're sorry
after the child leaves or something
ooo they regret what they did.

The techniques used in (26) are more typical of the narrative styles used by working-class speakers, who do not break out of the narrative context as freely as middle-class speakers, but instead embed their evaluation into the texture of the narrative. Some of the most highly skilled narrators, from working-class and rural societies carry this process of embedding evaluation much further. They introduce other characters who make the point of how dangerous or unusual the situation is. Thus the story abstracted above as (12) is told by a 74-year-old ex-carnival man about a man who wanted to kill him because he thought his wife had committed suicide on the narrator's account. He concludes:

(27) z But, however--that settled it for the day.
aa But that night the manager, Lloyd Burrows said,
"You better pack up and get out
because that son of a bitch never forgives anything
once he gets it in his head,"
bb And I did.
cc I packed up and got out.
dd That was two.

The narrator might just as well have attributed this evaluative comment to himself, but it carries more dramatic force when it comes from someone else.

Evaluative action. One can embed evaluation into a narrative effectively by telling what people did rather than what they said. This can be done about one's own actions: as in a short narrative of a lower-class boy from the Lower East Side (the brother of J. D. in No. 14 of the FB Test); he was left hanging on a masthead at maritime training school after a rope broke:

(28) I never prayed to God so fast and so hard
in my life!
(What happened?)
Well, the boys came up
and they got me.

I couldn't touch nuttin'.
I was shakin' like a leaf.

The narrator of (21), who uses much external evaluation, also has a gift for using tightly embedded actions of this sort.

(21) z and we were sitting with our feet--
just sitting there
waiting for this thing to start.
people in the back saying prayers, 'n everything....

nnn and when we saw that he was really over
ooo and then everybody heaved a sigh of relief

ppp and everybody came to
qqq and put away their prayer beads
:
sss and when we realized
          that we were really out of danger
     then we found out
          that we had been so tense
               that our feet were up against the panel,
               you know
               and we were holding on to everything.

Some narrators who come from an even more reticent tradition convey all evaluative emotion through the words or actions of others. The best examples might be drawn from the narratives of traditional New England story-tellers. A Maine fisherman, a noted story-teller in his community, gave us many accounts of very dangerous situations on the water when sudden thunderstorms arose "pickin' the water right up". There were several men drowned and many near-drownings in these accounts. Understatement is the rule in the narrator's view of the situation:

She started driftin' [nervous laughter] Bailey's Island
and it was rainin' and thunderin' too y'know, lightnin'
and so--I knew that--if it kept on little longer,
     I'd go ashore
:
and there was a lot of water in her
     'cause it rained awfully y'know too

But the narrator says nothing of his emotional evaluation of the situation. The actions of others are cited instead:

But Win Bibber was so scared
     that they--the drummers--they tried t'talk to him
          'n he wouldn't speak.

An' I don't know when he spoke first--
     but he never spoke
          till he got up off the dock anyway.

In another story, this narrator tells us in so many words that he was afraid, but wouldn't let on in front of others. He had on board a group of school teachers, including a Miss Fudge, who went out against his advice. He gives us his evaluation of the situation in minimal terms.

So by and by it come up rain squalls, y'know.
and blowin'
an' --then 'twould rain an' stop
'n--so we w's rollin, side to;
I didn't like it myself.

But his public position is necessarily more constrained.

By and by she wanted to go back,
an' I says, "Go back?
No use to go back," I said.
"We're halfway home now,
might just as well keep right goin'."
"Well," she said, "Are--are you worried?" she says;
"Scared?"
'n--well, I said, "I'm afraid some of you's goin' be
seasick, way's lookin'."
They were, you know.
An' I *was* worried,
but I didn't say anything.
But I was glad when we come round Jaquish Buoy
'n headed up in the bay.

This close-mouthed policy is one of the traditional positions taken in American narrative (as opposed to the "boaster" tradition). It is strongly represented in NNE narratives, as will appear below.

We thus have in view a wide range of evaluative clauses which tell the listener more or less explicitly that the events were strange, frightening, the sort of things that occur only once in a lifetime. We can now turn to the exemplary NNE narratives given in 4.8.1 to see what type of evaluations are contained in them. Boot's narrative (8) includes his own evaluation--outrage at Calvin's wild behavior: "Calvin, I'm bust your head for that!" Larry's narrative (9) has two distinct parts, like many fight narratives: the events leading up to the fight, and the fight itself. The first part contains an elaborate evaluation of the situation in clauses *y-aa*--the three rhymed couplets by which Larry provokes the dude to a fight. Note that after this clauses *gg* and *hh* are external in that Larry addresses the listener directly. But the pose of injured innocence taken here--*Why he do that*? has a very low degree of seriousness: it is Larry's conventional pose as a provocateur and not intended to deceive anyone [see Larry's *Why you hit me*? in 4.2.4]. What then is the point of the first part of the narrative, if any? It is not its strangeness or fearfulness (the other dude was only *a little bigger*). The point here is self-display common to many NNE narratives; Larry is displaying his verbal skill. Completely external evaluation on this theme would not be tolerated: one does not say "I'm bad, you understand!" but rather, "I'm not bad, you understand, but if you want to go to the hands..." The display of verbal skill is also shown in the pre-fight section of Norris's narrative (19), where he effectively destroys his opponent by his logic.

J. L.'s narrative (10) contains a partly embedded external evaluation, in clauses y-ee, where the narrator himself evaluates the entire situation but places his thoughts in his own mind at that time just as in narratives (23-25). Jacob S.'s adult narrative (11) has a fully internalized embedded evaluation u, spoken by the doctor: "Just that much more ~~to the right~~, and you'd a been dead."

It is no accident that the importance of evaluation in the narratives rises as we move from the few pre-adolescent narratives cited here, to adolescent narratives, to adult narratives; 4.8.5 will show this as part of a very regular tendency.

Evaluation by suspension of the action. All of the evaluative statements given above have the inevitable effect of suspending the action of the narrative. The emotions which were actually felt at the time may have been contemporaneous with the action, but when they are expressed in separate sentences, the action stops. The very process of stopping the action calls attention to that particular part of the narrative as important, and connected to the point, almost irrespective of the content of the clauses. Any series of non-narrative clauses inserted at a point in the narrative will have this effect, and if it is done at a point that may be seen as critical, the listener will hear this as creating suspense. That is what is done by J. L. when he keeps us waiting for the outcome in (10): the girl says powwww![22] and then the narrator holds us for three independent clauses while he evaluates the situation, and acts: then I hit the girl: powwww! We can display such suspension of the action by charting the displacement sets of the clauses as in Labov and Waletzky 1966. This is shown for Boot's narrative (8) in Figure 4-24. This technique of analysis is effective for

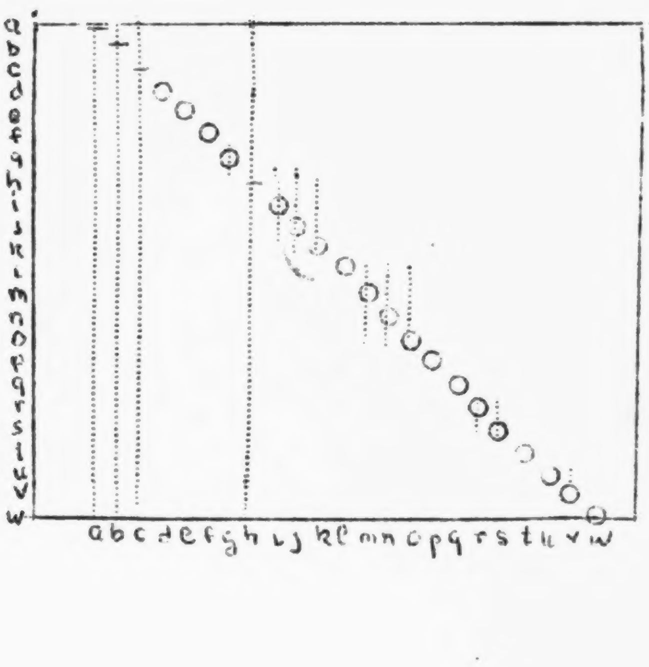


Fig. 4-24. Displacement sets for Boot's narrative on the rock war with Calvin, (8).

some narratives, but not for all.[23] Here it clearly isolates one of the two evaluative sections of the narrative--the point where Calvin's throw makes Boot angry. After Boot says that Calvin's rock almost hit him, he says that he stooped to get a rock; then he goes back to re-state the effect of this close miss.

(8) m So I looked down to get another rock.
n Say "ssh!"
o An' it pass me.
p I say, "Calvin, I'm bust your head for dat."

Because this set of clauses *n* - *p* has been displaced below m, it has a much greater effect. Because it could have been placed before *o* it shows up on Figure 4-24 as a burst of clauses with displacement sets of four or five units. This is indeed the most important part of the evaluative section, for the narrative was told as an illustration of Calvin's wildness. At the same time, the technique of charting displacement sets does not show Boot's evaluation of his own action, given by his detailed examination of the progress of his rock in clauses *s*-*v*.

(8) r I th'ew the rock
s and the rock went up
t I mean--went up--
u came down
v and say [slap!]

Except for the duplication of *s* and *t*, these succeed each other in temporal order, so that the action is not suspended, but it is slowed to a snail's pace so that the wonder of Boot's rock can be contemplated. Such slow motion will not be shown up by the charting of displacement sets. This technique reveals the effect of displaced orientation, and the effect of a number of clauses which describe contemporaneous actions. Highly evaluated narratives with great emphasis on verbal display such as Larry's (10) will show little structure in such a chart, because each utterance does in fact follow the other in a well ordered series, but the content of the speeches incorporates the evaluation. Finally, the analysis of displacement sets leaves for further analysis the internal structure of the clause--the syntactic and semantic features which mark evaluation. The balance of our discussion will concern this internal structure.

Basic narrative syntax. The syntax of the narrative clause itself is one of the simplest structures that may be found even in colloquial language. The surface structure is extremely simple, and for the most part is in a direct relationship with an equally simple deep structure. We can portray the surface structure of most narrative clauses by an itemization under eight headings. [It must be understood that these sentences have the same hierarchical phrase structure as in any English sentence. There is no suggestion here that the structure is a linear string: this is only a device for calling attention to the appearance of more complex elements when they do occur].

1. Conjunctions, including temporals: *so*, *and*, *but*, *then*...

2. Simple subjects: pronouns, proper names, *this girl*, *my father*...

3. The underlying auxiliary is a simple past tense marker which is incorporated in the verb; no member of the auxiliary appears in the surface structure except some past progressive *was*..*ing* in the orientation section, and occasional quasi-modals *start*, *begin*, *keep*, *used to*, *want*.[24]

4. Preterite verbs, with adverbial particles *up*, *over*, *down*, etc. [These will occasionally be placed under (6,7) by transformations not shown.]

5. Complements of variable complexity: direct and indirect objects.

6. Manner or instrumental adverbials.

7. Locatives: narrative syntax is particularly rich in this area.

8. Temporal adverbials and comitative clauses.[25]

The first pre-adolescent narrative cited may then be seen as a paradigm of this basic syntax:

(1)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
a		This boy		punched	me			
b	and	I		punched	him			
c	Then	the teacher		came			in	
d	and			stopped	the fight.			

The following longer extract from a pre-adolescent fight story shows this typical basic syntax of narrative clauses:

(29)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
m		I		hit	him		in the jaw.	
n	So	we		went			up on the sidewalk	
o	and	we	start	fightin'.				
p		I		knocked	him		down.	
q	and	we	was	rolled over			in the gutter.	
r	and	he		took	some doodoo.			
s				rubbed	it		in my face	
t	and	I		took	some			
u	and			rubbed	it	all	in his mouth.	
v		We	was	fightin'.				
w	Then	a man		came.				
x	and			grabbed	me		by my shirt	
y	and			pulled	me		off	
z	and	he	hadda	get up				
aa		I		thought*				
	*	he	had	kicked	me		in my back	
bb	So	I		turned			around	
cc	and			kicked	him		in the knee	

As once glances down each of these columns, it is apparent that they are filled by a small set of simple and regular items. This example is not unusually simple: on the contrary, it is typical of a great many narratives of adolescents and adults, as well. Here is the beginning of a narrative told by a graduate sociologist, a research worker at Mobilization for Youth on the Lower East Side:

(30)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
a		I	was	invited			to a party	
	when	I		was			in the state of Washington.	
b		it		was	a wife-swapping party			
c	and	I	didn't	know*				
	*	it		was	a wife-swapping party.			
d	and	the husband		swapped	his wife	without*		
		*her		knowing	it.			
e		She		got	angry			
f	and	he		punched	her.			
g	and	I		punched	him,			
h	and	he		jumped up				
i	and	he		grabbed	a knife			
j	and	he	came	running			at me	

Up to this point, the narrative follows basic syntax, with only one exception--the nominalization *_her knowing it_. 26 Right-hand embedding is indicated by an asterisk* at the end of the matrix sentence and another asterisk in the conjunction position of the constituent sentence. In basic narrative, we have of course frequent embedding of sentences after the verb _said_ or _know_, as in clause _c_ above.

We also get some sentences embedded as infinitives or participles after verbs other than the quasi-modals. Besides these examples of right-hand embedding, we assume only the normal set of particle placement and segmentalization transformations: the tense marker is placed in preverbal position and then incorporated with the verb; adverbial particles are placed in the manner or locative position. The occurrence of any other transformations which re-arrange the basic syntax will be indicated as in the following example from Larry's narrative (9). The lines indicate that the _wh_- has been attached to a manner (or reason) adverbial and moved to the beginning of the clause.

(9)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	an' why	he		do	that?		
	every time	somebody		fuck		with	me
	why	they		do	it?		

It is not necessary to belabor the fundamental simplicity of narrative syntax; it can be observed in any example given in this section. Reviewing the various points where narrative syntax is especially simple, we note that the subjects are normally anaphoric, since we have a long chain of connected sentences, and they refer to what was _given_ in previous sentences. Thus narrative subjects follow an unusually simple paradigm such as those in Boot's narrative (8).

We	I	I	[the rock]
it	Calvin	[the rock]	[the rock]
we	here	it	[the rock]
we	here	Calvin	[the rock]
I	I	I	his head
Calvin	Calvin	the rock	

Generally, simple subjects are the rule in all colloquial speech. But the simple auxiliaries noted in this narrative are peculiar to narratives. In ordinary conversation, we hear a rich variety of modals, negatives, _have_'s, and _be_'s before the verb. Furthermore, ordinary conversation in our interviews and group sessions show a great many transformations and embeddings not found in these narratives. Given the existence of this simple organization of narrative clauses, we can ask where, when, and with what effect do narratives depart from it? Since syntactic complexity is relatively rare in narrative, it must have a marked effect when it does occur. We have observed the existence of was..ing auxiliaries in the orientation section, and there are other points where the need for referential clarity leads to departures from the basic model:

(8)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		here		go	a wall			
	and	a far away						
		here		go	a wall.			

But by and large, the great bulk of examples of syntactic complexity beyond the cases mentioned occur in narrative with a clearly marked evaluative function. Some of these features occur in clauses which are explicitly devoted to evaluation. Others occur embedded in narrative clauses which further the complicating action. Let us consider as an example the following narrative fight story, told by a core member of the Cobras.

(29) (Did you ever get in a fight with a guy bigger than you?) Yeh. He tried to butch my candy.

Well, first we started off, and I got with him on the street. I was digging on this stick from the git, 'cause I started to pick it up and go from there with it. I ain't know the dude.

So then we got out in the street, and we were banging each other up. So I got off a good one, knock him down. He came back up and came out of his bag with his blade. So I ran off to the curb and went in the garbage can and got the stick. And I whipped that dude half to death.

And then I left. I walked off.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
a		He		tried*				
	*to			butch	my candy.			
b	Well							
	first	we		started off				
	and	I		got		with him	on the street.	
c		I	was	digging	on this stick			from the git.
	'cause	I	started to	pick	it		up	
	and			go			from there with it.	
d		I	ain't	know	the dude.			
e	So then	we		got			out in the street	
f	and	we	were	banging	each other up.			
g	So	I		got off	a good one			
h				knock	him		down.	
i		He		came			back up	
j	and			came			out of his bag	with blade

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
k	So	I		ran			off to the curb	
l	and			went			in the garbage can	
m	and			got	the stick.			
n	And	I		whipped	that dude	half to death.		
o	And then	I		left				
p		I		walked			off.	

[Junior H.,13, Cobras #495]

The narrator of this story uses the vernacular with cool efficiency, and he is much more hip than most. To butch is to force some smaller boy to give you his money or candy; originally, this is from butcher boys. I was digging on this stick from the git means that 'I was looking at and appreciating the value of this stick from the git-go (the beginning)'. Dude is a slightly pejorative term for someone who is not a close friend. When Junior adds, I ain't [didn't] know the dude, he avoids making the explicit connection, 'because I didn't know the dude and couldn't be sure that he would stay with the hands'.

As we glance down column 3, it appears that there are several departures from minimal syntax in the explanatory clause c which gives the inner thoughts and motivation of the narrator.

Without this clause c (and its associated clause d with deleted because) we would understand very little of the story: we might think that Junior's using the stick was an act of desperation on the part of someone who was losing the fight, whereas the story actually makes the reverse point. Seizing the stick was a product of forethought and cool planning. Note the parallel to the pre-adolescent narrative of Norris W. (19) and Larry's narrative (8): it is more important for Junior to show himself as cool and collected than to boast of his ability as a fighter. It is the other guy who loses his temper, and who loses badly as a result.

We are left with the problem that (29) seems to place all the evaluative force syntax in c. Does it then trail off in the last half? It seems unnatural that Junior would not evaluate his own success. It was at this point that Boot described in slow motion the path of his rock in (8). Yet Junior's narrative does give the sense of being well-formed and complete. Junior is cool: he does not overstate the case. The evaluative point is concentrated in clause n in the adverbial half to death. This quantifier is embedded as the last element in the resolution clause.

We must be prepared, then, to find the evaluative point of narratives compressed into relatively minor syntactic elements in the narrative clause. Investigations along these lines have led us to classify the evaluative elements in narrative under four major headings: intensifiers, comparators, extensives, and explanations. These four headings each include six to ten sub-types, depending on the syntactic devices used to carry out the functions. The four major types can be understood best in relation to the basic scheme of narrative clauses:

——— ——— ——— ——— ——— ———

This indicates a linear series of events which are organized in the narrative in the same order as they occurred. An intensifier selects one of these events and strengthens or intensifies it:

Intensifiers: ——— ——— ——— ━━━ ———

Some types of intensifiers. There are many ways in which this intensification can be carried out; most of them involve minimal departure from the basic narrative syntax. We will present the sub-types which we have used, proceeding from the simplest to the most complex from the syntactic point of view.

Gestures usually accompany a deictic this or that in the tape-recorded narrative. From a fight story of Speedy, the leader of the Cobras:

(30) g He swung
h and I backed up
i and I do like that
.
q Then all the guys start hollerin',
"You bleedin,
you bleedin',
Speedy, you bleedin'!"
r I say [sound] like that.

Sometimes the gesture is used instead of a sound, as in Boot's

(8) and the rock say [slap!]

Expressive phonology is superimposed upon other words of the clause. One of the most common modes is to lengthen vowels. In one of Larry's narratives he emphasizes:

(31) And we were fightin' for a lo-o-ong ti-i-me, buddy.

Most of the ways of referring to punches use a word like pow which is transcribed above as powwww! It is long, and usually devoiced throughout. Such devices are much more common than simple gestures, but there are many intermediate cases, like Boot's way of describing the rock's passage: it say shhhh!

Quantifiers are the most common means of intensifying a clause for narrators of all age ranges. Junior's half to death in (29) plays an important role in the narrative. The word quantifier all is often inserted at a critical point to intensify the effect of an attribute; from a fight narrative of one of the Aces:

(32) g and then, when the man ran in the barber shop
he was all wounded
h he had cuts all over

In Norris's fight narrative (19) we hear that

h I knocked him all out in the street.

Some operations with quantifiers are fairly mechanical. If two Spanish guys jump someone, that is bad; but if six Spanish guys jump him, that is another degree of magnitude, and calls for a different kind of action.

Certain lexical items are by their very nature evaluative. If you say that a certain girl was a killer as in J. L.'s story (10), you are plainly signalling that a fight with her was nothing run-of-the-mill. The word bad itself carries a strong evaluative force, as in Larry's story (9): "What you think you bad an' shit?" Certain obscenities, in the right context, have strong evaluative force. When Larry says in another narrative,

(33) I beat the shit out of that motherfucker

the word shit carries evaluative force, though the word motherfucker does not, in the sense that it is stronger to beat the shit out of someone than simply to beat him up or to whip him. The word fuck can have little weight in some contexts, but in a ritually threatening situation it carries considerable. From yet another narrative of Larry:

(34) m So he said, I mean, you know, don't be fuckin' with my old lady like that, man
.
n So I said, "Fuck it man, you know."
o So we went outside.

Foregrounding is a syntactic device which is used a great deal for emphasis in ordinary conversation. The most common examples are with temporal adverbials which commonly go at the end of the clause, although there is certainly a temporal position at the beginning as well. An adult told a story about a bully who kept pushing him around in front of a girl he liked:

(35) g An' I thought I *liked* the girl
h But some reason every day after school this kid was come
i and slap me side o' my head
impressin' this girl.

In this example, the reason adverbial is carried with the temporal one. Again, the narrator uses the same device of foregrounding to impress the listener with the size of the problem.

l So an--I couldn't--I *know* I couldn't whup the kid.
m Everyday this thing would happen.

The device of *repetition* is relatively simple from the syntactic point of view, but it is effective in narrative in two senses: it intensifies a particular action, and it suspends the action. We have seen many examples of such repetition above. In Boot's story about the rock (8), he says *The rock went up--I mean went up*. In the extract from Speedy's narrative given above, we have an exceptionally effective use of repetition:

(30) Then all the guys start hollerin', "You bleedin',
you bleedin'
Speedy, you bleedin'!"

In the NNE narratives, and in fight narratives in general, we find that there are many *ritual utterances* which do not contain any overt markers of emphasis--neither taboo words, nor quantifiers, nor expressive phonology. Yet a knowledge of the culture tells us that these apparently unexpressive utterances play an evaluative role: they are conventionally used in that position to mark and evaluate the situation. In an adult narrative from the Harlem series, a Negro man raised in New York City told about a fight with "a great big guy in the back alley".

(36) f And I went to pieces inside, you know?
Before I know it
g I picked me up a little rock,
h hauled off,
i and landed me a David and Goliath.
j I hit him up with that rock.
k An' he grabbed his head
l An' I grabbed *him*,
m told him "Come on right back up the back stairs."
n And there it was.

Clause *n* can be read as "And the shit was on." But it can only be given evaluative status by understanding it as a ritual utterance. At the end of the story, the narrator repeats, "And there it was, you know. I whipped a couple o' guys."

The final form of intensification to be considered here is the *WH- exclamation.* In Larry's original fight narrative (9), we hear the other guy say

> What you supposed to be *bad*, an' shit?
> What, you think you *bad*, an' shit?

The first WH- can be read as a question of the form, *What are you supposed to be*? But the second is equivalent to SE *What! you think you're bad*? Such WH- exclamations are of course a traditional means of expressing extreme surprise at an unusual event.

The intensifiers as a whole show little complication of the minimal narrative syntax. But the other three major types of internal evaluation do, and we will examine them as sources of syntactic complexity.

4.8.4. *Sources of syntactic complexity*. There should be no surprise at the simplicity of narrative syntax if we take the point of view: why should there be syntactic complexity? What reason would there be for making narrative syntax more complex than it is? If the task of a narrator is to tell what happened, what use has he for questions, or what reason would he have to speak of the future? And why indeed *should* the auxiliary contain negatives? What reason would the narrator have for telling you that something did not happen, since he is in the business of telling you what did happen? The use of negatives in personal narrative is not at all an obvious one. There are an infinite number of things which might be said *not* to have happened--how would one know which to select? The selection is based upon unstated expectations. Negative sentences clearly are drawn from such a set of social expectations--a cognitive background considerably richer than the set of events which were observed. Negative statements provide one way of evaluating events by placing them against the background of other events which might have happened, which were expected to have happened, but which did not. The term *comparator* thus includes negatives, which compare the events which did occur to those which did not occur. In terms of the narrative schema:

comparators: ——— ——— ———   ——— ———
↳ – – –

Questions perform the same elementary function in narrative: they refer to events which have not been placed in evidence; the future and the modals do the same. As we look down the auxiliary column at the various instances of questions, negatives, futures and modals, it can be seen that they occur typically at the point of evaluation, either in co-occurrence with other evaluative elements, or carrying out this function alone.

Instead of considering each of these possibilities separately, let us examine the auxiliaries of some of the narratives already studied in the light of this proposed function of modals, futures and negatives.

Boot's narrative about the rock war (8) has a few negatives in the orientation, which plainly have a referential function--*we ain't had nothin' to do* along with the planning imperatives of *Let's go*. Then there is a past progressive: *I was lookin'*, in the first evaluation section where Boot suspends the narrative for a moment to emphasize what a close call it was. All the rest of the verbs are preterits[27] except one future:

q I say, "Calvin, I'm bust your head for that."

In speaking of an event which has not yet occurred, Boot explicitly marks it as an evaluation of Calvin's wild act: it is for *that* that this head busting will (and eventually did) take place.

The adolescent fight narrative of Larry (9) is much richer in auxiliary structure. We can show this best by a skeleton outline which isolates the auxiliaries. Clause *c* of the Abstract contains a negative question--and it is of course a purely evaluative clause.

(9)	a	I		had a fight
	b	He		got mad...
	c		Ain't	that a bitch?

The complicating action begins with these exchanges:

d	I	was	sittin' on the corner smokin' my cigarette
e	I		was high

The orientation section contains past progressives, as usual.

f	He		walked over
g		"Can I	have a cigarette?"
h	He		was a little taller
i	"I	ain't	got no more...
j	I	ain't gon'	give up my last cigarette...
k	"I	don't	have no more."
l	He		dug on the pack.
m	"I	can't	get a cigarette?
	We	supposed to	be brothers..."

This series contains a question with a modal, several negatives, a negative future, a negative with a modal, and the quasi-modal *supposed to*. The narrative events contain preterits only: *walked* and *dug* (and of course the actions of saying, but for the moment we are not considering these; the negatives and modals occur both in and out of quoted speech.) We can turn from this highly evaluated narrative to one of the narratives of vicarious experience:

(17)	a	Napoleon		got shot
	b	he	had to	go on a mission
	c	this kid		went with Solo.
	d	they		went
	e	they		went through
	f	they		caught him.
	g	he		beat up them other people
	h	they		went
	i	he		said
	j	this old lady		was his mother
	k	he		say
	l	he		was the guy's friend.

The only evaluative element in this whole narrative is the *had to* in clause *b*-- the rest is a blank as far as any point, or evaluation is concerned. We can contrast this lack of auxiliary complication in the account of vicarious experience with Norris W's highly evaluated personal narrative.

(19)	a	I		was in third grade
	b	This boy		stole my glove
	c	He		took my glove
	d	and		said
	e	his father		found it
	f	I		told him
	g	it		was impossible
	h	he		got all mad
	i	I		fought him
	j	I		knocked him all out
	k	He		say
	l	He		give
	m	I	kept on	hitting him.
	n	He	started	crying
	o	he		ran home
	p	his father		told him
	q	he	ain't	find no glove.

There is a great deal of evaluation in clauses *d* and *e* which we will consider later. But it can be seen here that the quasi-modal *kept on* is closely connected with the evaluative function of this narrative (as paraphrased earlier), and the negative of *ain't* is used to form the crushing rebuke that falls on this boy's head: his father, his very own father, told him that it wasn't so, that he didn't find that glove.

Finally, we may consider the auxiliaries in the highly evaluated adult narrative of J. L. (10) about "the baddest girl in the neighborhood." The detailed characterization of this girl is cast in terms of things that would happen if other things didn't happen.

(10) a one was with a girl
b I was a kid
c she was the baddest girl...
d if you didn't bring her candy
e she would punch you
f you had to kiss her
g when she would tell you
h this girl was only 12
i she didn't take no junk.
j she whupped all her brothers.

The next section contains a flashback, in which J. L. explains the reason he came to school with no money, even though he knew there'd be trouble--because of the other thing he didn't want to happen. Evaluation is thus carried out by comparing the consequences of two events.

k I came to school
l I didn't have no money
m My ma wouldn't give me no money.
n I played hookies
o she put something on me.
p I said
q I 'm not gonna play hookies no more
r I don't wanna get a whupping.

There are four negatives here, in combination with modals and futures. The events that had not happened, but might yet should not happen are considered at length here.

r I go to school
s This girl says, "Where's the candy?"
t I said,
I don't have it."

This last negative, embedded in a quotation, may be simply necessary for referential clarity: the basic situation is--no candy. But after the next few events, J. L. goes into a long and complex examination of possible but unrealized events, using futures, negatives, and modals.

u She says: powww!
v I says to myself,
w There's gonna be times
my mother won't give me money
we are a poor family

x I can't take this all every time
she don't give me any money
y I say
I just gotta fight this girl
z She gonna hafta whip me.
aa I hope
bb she don't whup me.
cc I hit the girl.
dd I put something on it.
ee I win the fight.
ff That was one of the most important.

The combination of *going to have to* shows the combination of auxiliary elements that unite to give the sharpest type of evaluative comparisons.

The *imperative* is also a comparator, since the force of the command in narrative is frequently: 'you do this or else....' One long narrative of a Lower East Side taxi driver concerns a passenger that he is sure wants to hold up the cab and keeps giving him directions to out-of-the-way places. Luck is with him, though, and he manages to get out of it. At the end:

(37) mm and I said
I can't run around with you all night.
nn Now let's put an end to this.
oo This is the fare
pp You go your way
qq and I 'll go mine.
rr so I got out of it that way.

The close connection between the imperative and the future is seen here in qq and rr; both of them involve unrealized events that are weighed in the balance.

Questions are also comparators, which do not posit any actual event, but raise various evaluative possibilities in connection with them. When the baddest girl in the neighborhood asks, "Where's the candy?" the situation is fraught with consequences: it is equivalent to a command, with an or-else clause: 'if the candy is not there, then...' Normally, questions are embedded in an utterance of an actor; but evaluative questions are posed directly by Larry to the listener:

(9) gg An' why he do that?
hh *Everytíme* some*bódy* fuck with me,
why they do it?

These questions ask for an evaluation of the dude's actions. He in turn asks for an evaluation of Larry's action when he says, "What you supposed to be, *bad* an' shit?" And Larry in turn asks for an evaluation from the listener at the end:

(9) ss An' guess what?
tt After all that, I gave the dude the cigarette, after all that.
uu Ain't that a bitch?

The suggestion so far is that negatives, futures and modals all involve comparison. The paradigmatic comparison is of course the _comparative_ itself in its various forms: as the morphological comparative and superlative, in prepositional phrases with _like_, etc. Among the various syntactic forms that give younger speakers trouble, the comparative is foremost. In our "strange syntax" file we have collected a great many odd problems with complex comparative constructions. Of the various _comparators_, it is the comparative itself which reaches the highest level of syntactic complexity.

There are no comparatives in Boot's rock war narrative (8). In (9), Larry uses a fairly complex comparative which has great weight in establishing the meaning of everything that follows:

h He was a little taller than me, but not that much.

The comparative is used by J. L. at the same point in (10)--to evaluate the meaning of the following events by characterizing the opponent--in this case in the superlative form:

(10) c And she was the baddest girl, _the baddest girl_ in the neighborhood.

It is no accident that NNE deviates here from SE morphology: _baddest_ in place of _worst_. J. L. also uses the superlative in his final evaluation: ee That was one of the most important.

The adult narrative of J. S. (11) uses the comparative in combination with the modal _would_ in the last clause:

(11) u And the doctor just says, "Just about this much more," he says, "and you'd a been dead."

Comparators then include the imperative, questions, negatives, futures, modals, quasi-modals, _or_-clauses, and comparatives, more or less in increasing order of the syntactic complexity involved.

Extensives. A comparator moves away from the line of narrative events to consider unrealized possibilities, and compare them with the events that did occur; extensives bring together two events that actually occurred so that they are conjoined in a single independent clause.

Extensives: _____ _____ _____ ===== _____ _____

This operation requires the most complex syntax, and quickly goes beyond the syntactic possibilities found in the speech of the younger narrators. In order of their increasing syntactic complexity, we can list:

1. Progressives in be...ing which are usually used in narratives to indicate that one event is occurring simultaneous with another, but also indicates extended or continued action. Most of these occur in orientation sections; some can actually form narrative clauses[28]. But was..ing clauses also are found suspending the action in an evaluative section, as we have seen in Boot's narrative of the rock war (8).

2. Appended participles: one or more verbs in -ing, where the tense marker and be have been deleted, and the action described is heard as occurring simultaneously with the action of the main verb of the sentence, which itself may be a progressive. Such doubled progressives may be used frequently in orientation sections:

(9) d I was sittin' on the corner an' shit,
smokin' my cigarette, you know.

Here the progressives characterize the setting for the narrative as a whole. But more often such devices are used to highlight and evaluate the event of a particular narrative clause. From another narrative of Larry, already quoted as (34) above:

(34) e So the dude got smart.
I know*
* he got smart
'cause I was dancin' with her, you know,
'cause I was dancin' with her,
talkin' to her, an' shit,
whisperin' in her ear, an' shit,
tongue kissin' with her, an shit.

Such multiple participlesserve to suspend the action in an evaluative section; they bring in a wider range of simultaneous events while the listener waits for the other shoe to fall, as in this example from the evaluation section of (21), cited earlier:

(21) z and we were sitting with our feet--
just sitting there,
waiting for this thing to start,
people in
the back saying prayers, 'n' everything.

Another type of extensive is the *double appositive*, which is relatively rare; it is clearly used to heighten or deepen the effect of a particular description. From a pre-adolescent narrative:

(38) f and I knocked 'im down
g and one of them fought for the Boys' Club
h I beat him.
i and then, they gave him *a knife*, a *long one*, *a dagger*,
j and I fought,
k I fought him with that...

Strangely enough, *double attributives* are as rare as double appositives. One would think that such noun phrases as *big red house*, and *cold wet day*, would occur often enough in colloquial speech, but the fact of the matter is that they do not. In subject position, even a single attributive is uncommon (other than demonstratives, articles and possessives), as inspection of the narratives quoted here will show. Some adults use such complex noun phrases more than others; one working-class man from the Harlem adult sample, raised in New York City, introduced his narrative with this clause:

(39) a You see, a great big guy in the back alley,
He tried to make them push him on the swing
by him pestering them
or trying to take advantage of them.

This double attributive is associated with very complex syntax indeed. There are some practised, adult working-class narrators who naturally run to such combinations, who use other extensives such as *left-hand participles*. For example, we obtain very complex syntax from a New York taxi driver whose narrative (37) was cited above:

(37) j and suddenly somebody is giving me a destination
k I look in the back
l There's an unsavory-looking passenger in the back of the cab
who had apparently gotten into the cab
while it was parked
and decided he's gonna wait for the driver.

The phrase, *an unsavory-looking passenger in the back of the cab* might be paraphrased as several narrative clauses: I looked into the back of the cab/ I saw this character/ I didn't care for the way he looked". The left-hand participle then does a great deal of work in characterizing the antagonist in this narrative--more concisely perhaps, than the elaborate descriptions given by J. L. in (10). It is not accidental that some of the most complex syntax is used in describing the principal antagonist, who is the chief justification for the claim that the narrative is reportable. Note that one reason for this complex form is that it is coupled with three other sentences which are embedded in the description, so that it is quite convenient to get this material out of the way in attributive, left-hand position.

The emphasis on *left-hand* vs. *right-hand* is motivated by the fact that the former is far more complex for speaker and listener alike. Absolute right-hand embedding is a simple matter for most children, as we see in "The House that Jack built". It is one thing to add a *right-hand participle* to qualify an action; as in this example cited before to illustrate foregrounding:

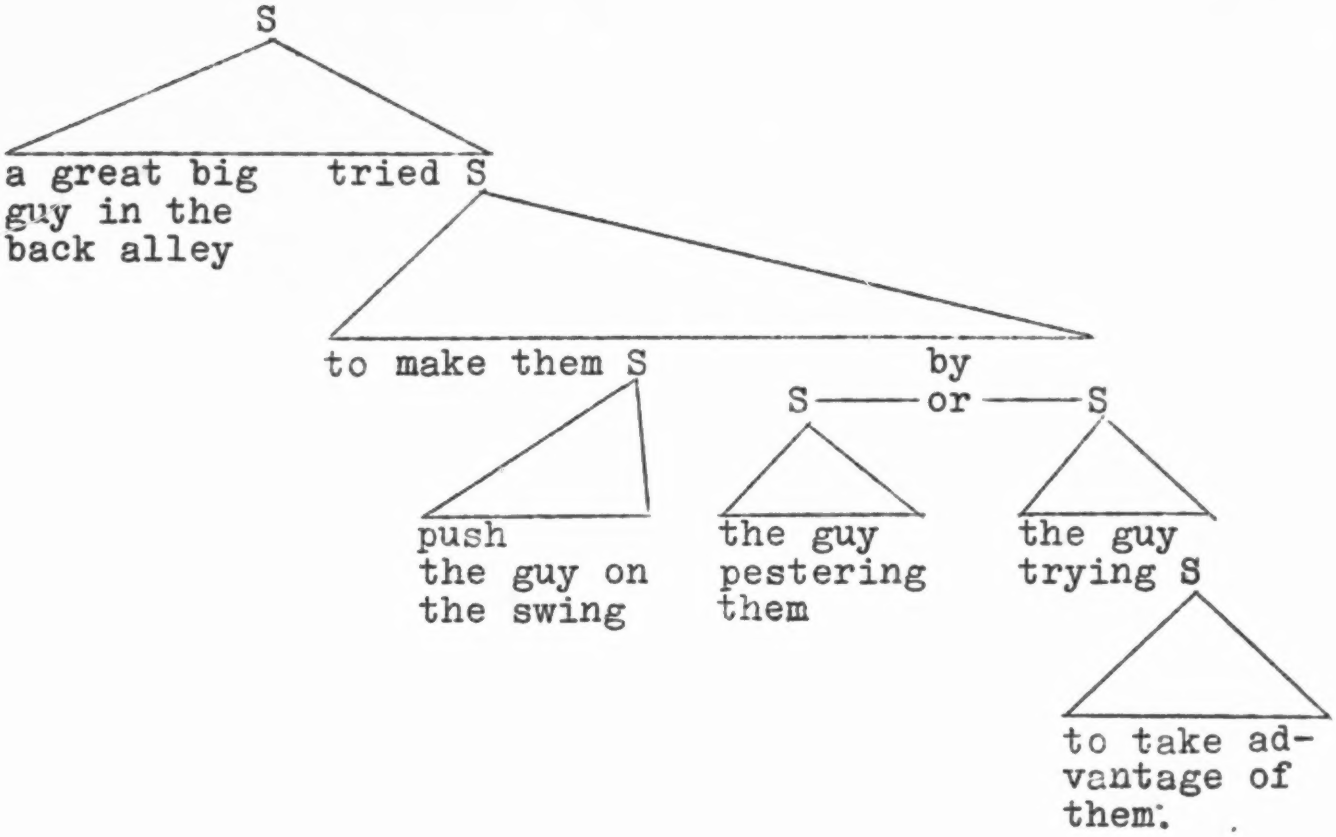
(35) But some reason every day after school
this kid was come
and slap me side o' my head,
impressin' this girl.

It is another to build up participles as attributives before a noun, keeping the syntactic structure open while the equivalent of an entire sentence intervenes between other modifiers and the head:

(40) She was a big, burly-looking dark type sort of girl
a real, geechy-lookin' girl

This example is taken from a narrative to be given in full in 4.8.5, which shows the most highly developed internal syntax of any of our narratives. Here this complex construction with two left hand participles and multiple attributives is used to enrich and deepen the characterization of the chief protagonist in the fight.

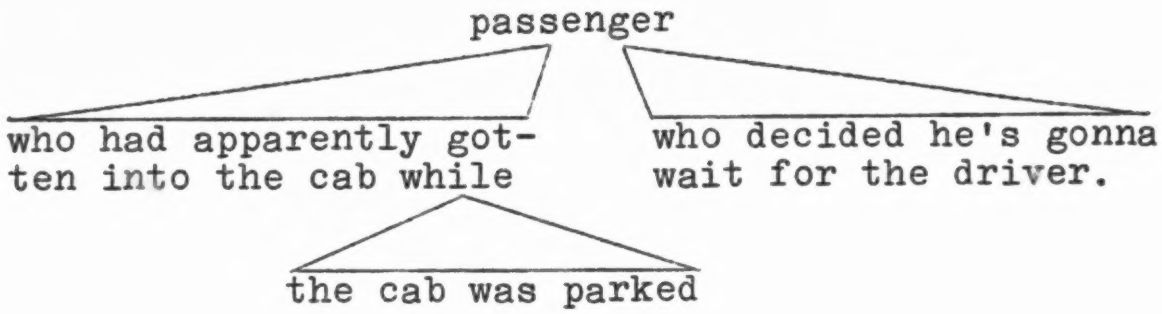
The most complex of all extensives, and of all evaluative devices, is the process of nominalizing whole sentences. While participles such as those above preserve the verb phrase and the complement, nominalization can include within the noun phrase the original subject, object and other complements which may themselves include whole sentences. We normally find such nominals as complements of the verb, rather than as subjects--indeed, it is quite possible that this is not an option available for subjects in the vernacular. In the complex introductory sentence of (39) we find two such nominalizations:


S
a great big guy in the back alley
tried S
to make them S
push the guy on the swing
S
by or
S
the guy pestering them
the guy trying S
to take advantage of them.

Without considering the complex attributives of the subject, there are five sentences embedded as the object of the main verb. This is a compound structure in the sense that there are two nominalizations taken as instrumentals, and so not absolutely "right-hand". Here this complex syntax occurs in an abstract clause, when the function of embedding was to say as much as possible in one sentence. Such examples are extremely rare in the course of narrative, but we will see below examples which occur further into the complicating action. Participal construction such as those cited above occur in close connection with the expressive and evaluative function of narrative: it remains to be seen whether full nominalizations of this sort can be used to "suspend the action" in the same sense.

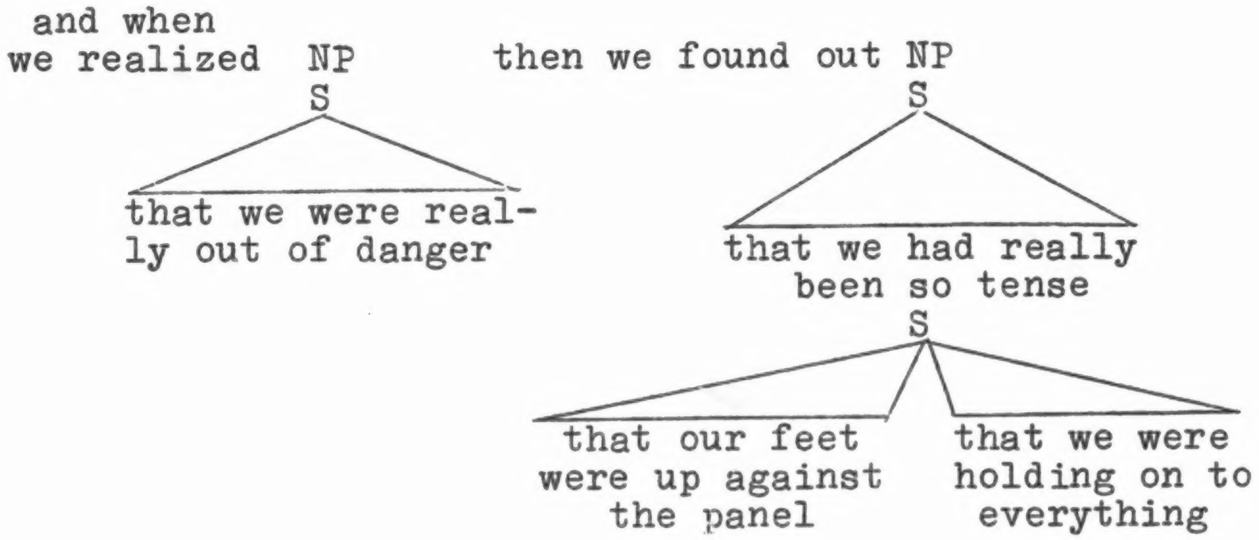
Explanations. Some of the evaluation and clarification of a narrative is necessarily done in separate clauses, appended to the main narrative clause or to an explicit evaluative clause. These may be *qualifications* connected with such conjunctions as *while*, *though*; or *causal*, introduced by *since* or *because*. Furthermore, we distinguish three types of attachment to the main clause: simple, complex, and compound. By simple, we mean that there is only one clause; by complex, that a clause is embedded in a clause which is in turn embedded in the main clause, and by compound, that two clauses are embedded at the same point in the matrix clause. Both types are exemplified in (39) and (37) above. We can sketch the structure of (37) as:

(37)


passenger
who had apparently gotten into the cab while
who decided he's gonna wait for the driver.
the cab was parked

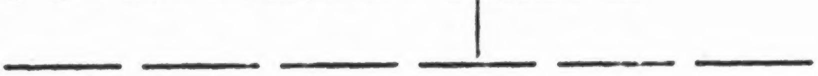
We do not count here embedding on verbs of saying and knowing, since the use of such absolute right-hand embedding with verbs of this type is universal and automatic among all speakers. We do find, in the evaluation sections of some speakers, complex embedding of a type that is not used at all by others: from a narrative about an airplane trip quoted before:

(21) sss


and when we realized NP
S
that we were really out of danger
then we found out NP
S
that we had really been so tense
S
that our feet were up against the panel
that we were holding on to everything

At first glance, it would seen that such embedded finite clauses differ only technically from the nominalizations and participles classified as extensives. In the extensives, we have additional transformations which delete the tense markers and combine this material into single clauses, while in the explanations, we have complete clauses added. This is usually treated as a trivial difference; for example, the three complementizers for-to, possessive + -ing, and that are normally considered as a set--three equivalent ways of attaching embedded sentences to the matrix sentence. But for our purposes there is a crucial difference in the deletion of the tense marker after for-to and poss-ing. No separate time distinction can be made with infinitives and gerunds; they necessarily are considered co-extensively with the main verb as far as temporal sequence is concerned. That is not the case with the finite clauses which have that complementizers. Here we can explain an event by referring to something that happened long before or long after. This is the case with (21), where the tenses of the explanatory clauses refer to points much earlier in the narrative. Thus explanations do not necessarily serve the evaluative function of bringing several actions together. The action of the narrative is suspended, but the attention of the listener is not maintained at that point in time--it may be transferred backward or forward, or into a realm of abstract speculation wholly unrelated to the narrative. Thus we may represent the explanations in the narrative scheme as

Explanations:



The explanation of the various complications inherent in the narrative situation may serve an evaluative function--to explain why a person was frightened, or how big someone was. But explanation may itself be required only to describe actions actions and events that are not entirely familiar to the listener. We would then expect that the distribution of explanations would be very different from that of the other sources of syntactic complexity, and in the next section, it will appear that that is the case.

In this discussion of the sources of syntactic complexity in narrative, we have set out a classification of the various ways in which the minimal syntactic pattern is developed. There are many other technical devices used in narrative which might have been discussed here: deletions which include claims to ignorance, the use of the passive, and ellipsis; re-orderings which include monologues, flashbacks, and displacement of orientation. There are also dysfunctional aspects of narration: confusion of persons, anaphora and temporal relations. In this report, we have limited the discussion to those evaluative devices which involve the internal structure and syntactic complexity of the narrative units.

Some of the syntactic features discussed here occur in clauses which have a purely referential function: they clarify for the listener the simple factual circumstances surrounding the narrative. But most occurrences of these features are closely linked to the evaluation of the narrative: they intensify certain narrative events that are most relevant to the main point; they compare the events that did occur to those which might have but did not occur; they extend the linear dimension of the narration by superimposing one event upon another; and they explain the point of the narrative in so many words. The examples we have cited above merely illustrate, but do not prove this association between syntactic complexity and evaluation. In the next section, we will present certain quantitative data which will make this association more evident, and show the growth of syntactic complexity with age.

4.8.5. Development of evaluative syntax with age. It is often said that a child coming to school at the age of five has already learned most of the grammar of his language.

This proposition may be a healthy corrective to those who argue that they are teaching the child to speak the English language in the first grade, but it is easy to overstate. In the course of our study of narrative structure and syntactic complexity, we made a comparison of stories told by Negro pre-adolescents [age 10-12], adolescents [age 13-16] and adults [from the Harlem sample], in order to see what development actually takes place in the use of the evaluative devices outlined above. It is clear that every child is in possession of the basic narrative syntax: it is also true that children know how to use gestures, quantifiers, repetition, negatives, futures, modals and because-clauses. The question is whether or not they know how and when to use these devices for specific purposes in the course of telling a story.

Ten fight narratives were chosen for each group. Eventually, a larger sample of all of our narratives may be useful for examining a number of details: but the basic patterns emerge with great clarity from this small set. Table 4-19 shows the average use of the four major types of evaluational devices for the three age groups. The first column shows the raw totals; the second column the totals corrected for the average length of the narratives measured as the number of independent clauses. This average length is longest for the adults, [Ad] --27.4 clauses--slightly less for adolescents [TA] and only about 40 percent of this for pre-adolescents[PA].

TABLE 4-19

TOTAL USE OF EVALUATIONAL CATEGORIES BY AGE

	Ad		TA		PA	
	Tot	Tot/L	Tot	Tot/L	Tot	Tot/L
INTENSIFIERS	88	3.20	51	2.05	12	1.23
COMPARATORS	113	4.10	71	2.85	12	1.23
EXTENSIVES	23	.84	12	.48	1	.12
EXPLANATIONS	20	.73	12	.48	1	.12
L:	27.4		24.8		9.6	

L = Av. No. of independent clauses.

The figures under all four heads show a regular and marked increase in moving from pre-adolescents to teenageers, and another large increase from adolescents to adults. The intensifiers show the shallowest slope, roughly 1 to 2 to 3; the comparators are somewhat steeper in their rate of growth; and the extensives and explanations show the sharpest rate of all, about 1 to 4 to 8. Looking at this table, we can assert that the pre-adolescents still have a great deal of of language learning ahead of them. The ability to use negatives, futures and modals in ordinary conversation is not equivalent to the ability to use them in narrative.

One can ask whether this is a syntactic ability, a question of verbal skill on a broader sense, or a growth of cognitive ability. In any case there is a major aspect of development in narrative itself which takes place long after the basic syntax of the language is learned, and it is quite possible that some of the more complex comparators and extensives are outside of the linguistic capacities of the pre-adolescents.

Table 4-20 shows the use of the various sub-types of evaluational devices as the number of narrators who used each device at least once. The numbers range from 1 to 10: it appears that the only 100 percent categories are the use of negatives and quantifiers by adults.

TABLE 4-20

NUMBER OF NARRATORS USING EVALUATIONAL DEVICES AT LEAST ONCE

INTENSIFIERS	Ad	TA	PA	COMPARATORS	Ad	TA	PA
Gestures	1	1	0	Imperatives	6	3	1
Phonology	3	5	0	Question	4	4	1
Quantifiers	10	6	4	Negatives	10	7	4
Lexical items	7	5	0	Futures	2	1	0
Fore-grounding	2	1	1	Modals	7	4	2
Repetitions	3	5	0	Quasi-Modals	7	6	2
Ritual	5	1	3	Or-clauses	2	3	0
WH-exclamations	1	3	1	Comparatives	6	6	1
	32	27	9		44	34	11

EXTENSIVES				EXPLANATIONS			
Be. . . ing	0	3	0	Simple: qual.	3	3	0
Double . .-ing	1	1	0	" caus.	5	3	1
Double appositive	2	1	1	Complex: qual.	2	0	0
Double attrib've	2	1	0	" caus.	1	1	0
Participle: rt.	5	1	0	Compound: qual.	0	0	0
left	1	1	0	" caus.	2	1	0
Nominalizations	2	1	0		13	8	1
	13	9	1				

Among the intensifiers, we see that the pre-adolescents are most apt to use quantifiers; the adolescents show a much richer use of expressive phonology and marked lexical items. Among the comparators, the most striking increase with age is in the comparative itself. The extensives are practically outside of the range of the pre-adolescents sampled here: the only item used with any degree of frequency by any group is the right-hand participle in the adult column.

Explanations are equally rare among pre-adolescents: the leading item here is the simple causative clause.

We also wished to compare the narratives of the white Inwood group with that of the NNE speakers of south central Harlem. Six fight narratives told by the Inwood adolescent [TA] group were studied, and the averages comparable to Table 4-19 are shown below:

	Total	Tot/L	
Intensifiers	29	1.26	
Comparators	23	1.00	
Extensives	4	.16	
Explanations	0	.00	I=23.3

The values for this small group of white teen-agers are comparable to those of the Negro pre-adolescents, not that of the Negro teen-agers. The profile for the types is approximately the same as for the Harlem PA group. It is perhaps too much to assert from this small study that the NNE speakers have greater narrative skills than the Inwood group, but there is no reason to think that the NNE group is at all behind or backward in this respect. On the contrary, we have presented many NNE narratives which in our opinion, show the highest degree of syntactic and narrative proficiency.

In 4.8.4, the association between syntactic complexity and narrative evaluation was only illustrated, but hardly demonstrated. One way of examining the relation is to compare narratives of personal experience, which are highly evaluated, with narratives of vicarious experience, which are not. The following tabulation shows five accounts of television programs, taken from our pre-adolescent interviews in south Central Harlem:

	Total	Tot/L
Intensifiers	4	.25
Comparators	13	.81
Extensives	1	.06
Explanations	12	.75

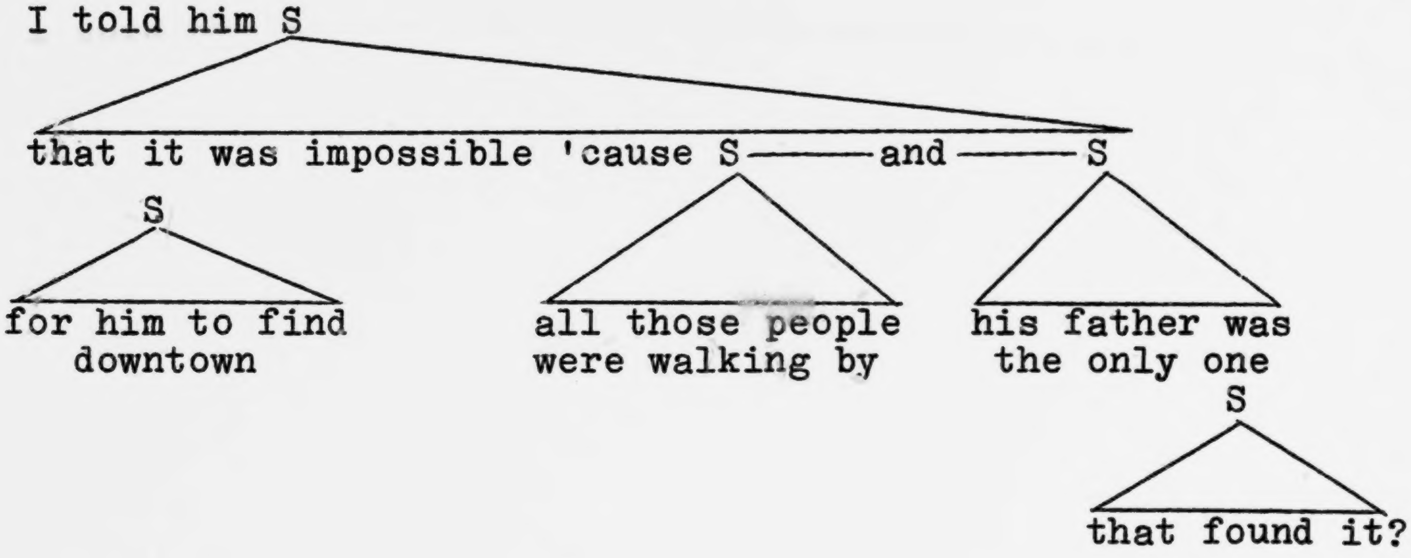
There is an extraordinary number of explanations in this series: accounts of where things were, and the reasons things happened--more than appeared in the particular examples given above as (17) and (18). But the poverty of evaluation proper is also clear here: the use of intensifiers is only one quarter of that in the fight narratives, and the comparators are less frequent as well. Most of the explanations fall into the purely referential classification: the low level of affect associated with the television narratives is evident from this tabulation.

The explanatory clauses which appear in the U.N.C.L.E. narratives may be illustrated by such sequences as the following, the first sentence from one of the 1390 Lames:

(41) a Well, Napoleon Solo and Ilya, they went to this country
where these people were drinking water
that was poi--that had some fluid in it
called V-8, V-8-5
and when they went in there
they had these suits
where they couldn't talk
because they had no communications.

This is one of the most complex sentences in this series; it shows how the orientation section may achieve referential clarity by this kind of embedding. It is no accident, of course, that such a high degree of explanation is exemplified in the narrative of a lame. Complex explanations of this sort may take a more prominent place in the evaluation of a narrative. When Norris W. analyzes the argument of the boy who stole his glove in (19), he uses one infinitival embedding, and three finite clauses in both compound and complex relation to the main clause:

(19) e


I told him S
that it was impossible 'cause S —— and —— S
S
for him to find downtown
all those people were walking by
his father was the only one
S
that found it?

A middle-class speaker might have re-organized these clauses and avoided the compounding by nominalizing the third clause and making it dependent on the fourth:

'cause with all those people walking by
just his father would be the only one
to find it?

In any case, it seems clear that the evaluation section of a narrative will contain such complex explanatory clauses when it is important to unfold the logic of the situation. Explanatory clauses are not, however, part of the internal structure of narrative clauses, and therefore should be differentiated from intensifiers, comparators and extensives. The essential difference is that with the retention of its own tense marker, the explanatory clause does not embed or superpose its content into the same time reference as the independent clause.

Internal evaluation. We will conclude this section with three fight narratives from the NNE speech community which show a high degree of development of internal evaluation. The narratives will be presented in continuous text with the intensifiers, comparators and extensives underlined (except simple *be...ing* clauses;[29] stress will be indicated above the word). We will not be interested in the isolation of an evaluation section so much as the concentration of evaluative devices about the main point of the narrative--the characterization of the protagonist and antagonist, and the particular way in which the narrative answers the potential question, "So what?"

The first narrative is from a sixteen-year-old member of the Cobras, whom we will refer to by his attribute *Arbar*. He is a full member of the Bohemian Brothers, and the ideology of black nationalism is deeply embedded in his approach to the situation of the narrative.

(42) (Did you ever fight with a cat that was bigger than you?) yeah. (What went down?)

Was about this girl I was goin' with, the one I told you about on the tape. Well-um-this happened--this--this particular time I happened to ask the girl to go with me, you know? So she say, "Yeah." So he rappin' his **game** down to her. *Every day* I get out of school, I see this cat with his arm around her, you know? So *I didn't say nothing*. I just lay, you know? So *I was gonna wait* to see if *she w'gonna tell me about it*, you know?

So *one day* she happened to tell me about it, you know? So I walked up to the guy, say "Well-um-look here, fella, you know *you messin' with my chick*, you know?" He says, "*So what about it*?"

So he was a brother too, you know. So I say, "*You a brother?*" He say "Yeah". "So, all right, *I'm not gonna attack you* now. *I'm gonna wait for you* to get you with the hands. I don't want--*I'm a wait till you hit me*." He said, "O.K.", took off his coat *like a big man*, you know.

I had my gun in my pocket.([Laughs]. Shit--)

I took out my gun and gave it to my girl friend. I took off my coat. I stand up there, you know.

So he swung, hit me in my jaw. I say, "*Tha's boss*, brother. *Le's get with the hands now*."

He was th'owin' that *fancy* stuff. I was stand' up in the corner, you know, *I was stand' in the corner* and get away, you know. So he begins *jabbing*, *jabbing*, you know. *All of a sudden* he grabbed me, you know? I just picked him up, and th'ew him, you know?

So my girl frien' brother say, "*Don't do that, fight with your hands*." I say "O.K." I jumped out in open, you know. So we was goin'. So I clipped him in the eye. He got mad, you know, said "You gettin' *bad*, 'cause you in front of your girl friend, you know." I said, "Bawz, brother, *I'm gettin' bad*." He said, "*Come on*."

I was just doin' it to him. So my girl frien' says, "*Stop fightin'*", like that, you know. I turn my back to the guy, you know, 'cau' now, I knew he heard me now.

So he walk up to me, clip me in my jaw, you know, and ran. I pull out my gun, shot up in the air, you know? The cops came around.

So everybody say, "*Give me that gun*." So I *wan' run up to that cat* and *shoot him*, you know? But I say, *Never mind, I'm not gonna do that to my brother like that*."

So *ever since that day to this one*, we*'on'*talk about it. *Every day* he see me, "Hello Sam, wha's happenin', brother?" "Nothin'."

[Arbar (Samuel J.),16,Cobras #504]

This narrative falls into two roughly equal parts, like most well-developed fight narratives. The situation which led up to the fight has its evaluation section in the third paragraph, where the principal theme in the question "You a brother?" is followed by the negative future, "I'm not gonna attack you." The result is the fight. The fight itself is evaluated at several points, but the final evaluative point is again signalled with the negative future: "Never mind, I'm not gonna do that to my brother." It is the same point which underlies the effect of the coda of the last paragraph. The exchange "Wha's happenin'?" "Nothin'" must be excluded from the usual classification of question and negative by higher level rules. These are routines which do not intensify the action. On the contrary, they are detensifiers, a category which must be reserved for further study.

The conflict between the two cultural patterns is so evident that it does not require too much comment. Muslim ideology says: "do not fight your brother;" NNE cultural imperatives say, "if you let him take your woman, you are not a man". It must be remembered that most of the violence described in these pages is directed against Negroes by Negroes; a main goal of Muslim ideology is to bring this to an end. Arbar claims that his rational approach can reconcile the two points of view. The main emphasis of the narrative is not so much on Arbar's fighting ability, but on his cool. Again the narrator portrays himself as calm and rational on the outside, even when he is boiling with anger inside. It is the other antagonist who is provoked and starts the fight. The protagonist is above all skillful in his choice of words and his control of the situation through words and actions.

Among the evaluative devices used by Arbar, the most important are the comparators--ritual questions, the negative, future, quasi-modals, and the comparative like a big man. He shows an unusually strong tendency towards foregrounding; there is a very prominent example in the first line of the coda.

The second narrative to be examined here is by C. J., a Negro man 39 years old who has lived on 112th Street most of his life. He graduated from a vocational high school, and has traveled around the world in the Navy. We find in his narrative an extraordinary ability to use complex syntax. At the same time he uses a good number of NNE grammatical forms. It is clear from his own account that C. J. was a lame, but he was close enough to the NNE subculture of the time. He uses such NNE forms as the zero possessive the girl cousin. Through his eyes we can see the Jets of twenty years ago.

(43) (What was the most important fight you remember?) Tha's a shame, 'cause one was a girl (Laughter) I had to dust off. She was a--she was a cousin of a girl that one of the fellas was goin' with, and I can't think o' her name. Oh--Lord have mercy, I can picture her for you, I can't think o' her name. Sometime I see the girl cousin, the one I beat up on the subway gon' to work sometime. I can't thin--

(How'd it start?) Well, like I say, you know, we was all together, and I was like the shy one. I never got into any fights. I would hang out with 'm, an' when it come to girls and this, I would do

> the same thing. But like I say, I never went in for stealin', you know, like swipin' comic books and swipin' fruit off the stand, and them cats would. Maybe they would go in for a little light pocketbook snatchin' or muggin'. But see, I never went in for that.
>
> And there was a girl around the block that liked me, and I was--I never bothered too much--I liked the girl. . And then they set this girl up here to tease me or to mess with me or some kinda way. Then we got into an old big battle there. And you know the curse words then; when you was a kid, they could call you a cocksucker or son-o'-bitch, anything they want, but they call you a motherfucker, that was a fightin' word. The first thing they say "Ah, you're puttin' me in the dozens", see?
>
> So that's how the fight come about. They claim like she put me in the dozens and I'm supposeta go round and tighten this mess up. So actually, all I did was slap her a couple a times. She cried. And then they got her cousin. And the cousin--that's it, her cousin's same name as my daughter--Beatrice. And she was a big, burly-lookin', dark type sort of girl, real geechee-lookin' girl, musta had big mu-muscles as anybody else. And she come up and wanted to jump on me about her cousin.
>
> Then I had to fight her. After I hit her a couple o' times, she's supposta be tough, she's sposta be whippin' all them boys around there. And you know, after that y'know, like I was the hero round there for a while.
>
> [C.J., 39, NYC, #873]

This is a great difference between the kind of evaluation used by C. J. and that used by Arbar. We can look to the passage that describes the chief antaghonist for the characteristic concentration of evaluative material:

> she was a big burly-lookin' dark type sort
> of girl, real geechee-lookin' girl

Geechee-lookin refers to the Creole girls of the Carolina coast: large and muscular. There are five left hand attributes of girl, including two complex participles--certainly the most complex single case of left-hand embedding in our materials. Such forms are characteristic of C. J.: he also constructs such nominalizations as a little light pocketbook snatchin'; the narrative is full of nominalizations which we do not find in the speech of the younger narrators. But this is his richest and tells us that the massive power of this girl (and his overcoming of it) is the main point of the story.

This story is not cast in the heroic mold of Arbar's account or Larry's fight narratives. The conclusion shows C. J. as a victor, but plainly for the first time. Note the use of the quasi-modal *supposta* to underscore the result--the events that were supposed to occur, but did not occur, are compared with what actually happened, and so heighten the effect of his beating up on her. It is noteworthy that this narrative of C. J. is one of many cases of "most important fights" in which women are the chief antagonists. The hostility expressed towards women in the toasts (4.2.2) is very much alive in these narratives.

For the third narrative, we will return to one of the classic fight stories of Larry of the Jets. Larry has grown up on 112th Street in the same neighborhood as C. J., but he is an exponent rather than an onlooker in regard to NNE values. He does not sympathize with the Muslim ideology of Arbar--his narrative is completely within the classic values of NNE sub-culture. But he claims the same skills; the ability to provoke the other, to stay cool oneself, and to come out on top in the end. Again, verbal performance is as highly valued as fighting ability.

(44) (What was the best rumble you were ever in?) Let me see..Oh yeah, with this dude in Brooklyn. Yeah. (Like, could you tell me what happened?) Well, you see, it's just *as simple as this*.

> Well, uh, you know, I happen to be walking a-pass. An' me and the dude we was good friends. So we got *hi-i-gh*, an' shit, you know. So then the dude old lady came around, you dig it. So-uhm-the dude got smart. I know he got smart 'cause I was dancin' with her, you know, *'cause I was dancin' with her*, *an talkin' to her*, an' shit, *whisperin' in her ear*, an' shit, *tongue kissin' with her*, an' shit.
>
> An' the dude got mad, man. So he walked over to me an' pushed me. So I said, Eh man, *whatchou doin'?*" you know, cause he was high, you know. So I said, *Whatchou doin!?*" "I mean, you know, *don't be fuckin' with my old lady*, like that, man, *or else*, you know, *you have to step outside*. You know." So I said, "*Fuck it*, man, you know."
>
> So we went on outside. So we started puggin', "*Poum*! *Poum*!" and *we were fightin*' for a *l-o-o-ng ti-i-me*, buddy, until *all of a sudden* he threw the *wro-ong shit*. And *I don't know what I did*, but *the next thing* he was on the ground. *He was on the ground*. And when he got up, *he didn't wanna fight no more*.

> (Didn' wanna?) No-o-o, I don't know what I did,
> but I did sump'm, knocked him on the ground.
> (Fucked 'im up!) Yeh. And I still coulda took
> his old lady. But you know, I ain't gonna do
> that.
>
> [Larry, 16, Jets, #560]

In this short narrative, Larry uses the whole range of evaluative devices. Among the intensifiers there is an especially rich use of expressive phonology; the comparators show many ritual questions as in Arbar's narrative, with negatives and imperatives playing an important role. There is a heavy play on one of the deletion modes of evaluation--"I don't know what I did"--this claim to ignorance is a way of magnifying the wonder of one's own fighting ability without direct boasting. It may be paraphrased as "It was so fast and slick that I don't even know what it was myself, but there it was..." Larry uses this device many times in the course of his narratives. We have already pointed out how Larry's use of a rich set of conjoined participles to suspend the action of the first part--the pre-fight narrative. This evaluation places the point of the narrative very early--it is Larry's provocation which is highlighted. The succession of ritual questions just before the fight itself marks another evaluative point, but it is not as rich as the earlier one. Notice that the imperative issued by the dude has the explicit or else clause which we mentioned above as being implicit in the imperatives of fight narratives.

The cloud of mystery thrown over the third paragraph by "I don't know what I did" evaluates and suspends the action of the fight itself. It must be admitted that Larry's narratives are so rich in evaluation that it is difficult to assert that any one section is given great prominence. The over-all claim made by the evaluation is the same, though: the portrait of a man who is rational enough to be cool in verbal exchange, but passionate enough to be wild in a fight. Larry's deliberate acts of provocation are the central point of all his narratives: witness the rhymed couplets of (9), and the participial dance of this one.

The coda of this narrative is strikingly parallel to the coda of narrative (9) where Larry finally gives his opponent the cigarette--and he smokes it! Both codas fall back on a higher morality--the solidarity of the group which NNE members all recognize, and which emerges once anger is given its day in court.

With these three narratives, we conclude our examination of the personal narratives of the NNE sub-culture, and of the development of verbal skills among ~~the Jets and~~ the T-Birds, the Jets and the Cobras.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

In Chapters III and IV of this report, we have presented our findings on non-standard Negro English in considerable detail. Although there is a great deal of linguistic and cultural information in these pages, it was not our intention to present a complete description of the language and culture of the ghetto areas. Each chapter is a book in itself, yet there are many more books which might be written on specific features of the language. Our aim has not been a "complete" description, if that indeed is possible, but rather an understanding of the ways in which the two dialects are related. We have come to certain conclusions about the structural and functional differences between NNE and SE, their relative importance, the type of rules involved, and their implications for education. In this chapter, we will attempt to sum up these conclusions as concisely as possible.

5.0 The nature of the evidence

Before presenting these conclusions, it may be helpful to re-consider briefly the nature of the evidence used in this study. Our conclusions will differ sharply with two other sets of writings on non-standard Negro English; part of the reason is the type of data we use, and our approach to it.

(1) In dealing with the structure of NNE, we do not find a foreign language with syntax and semantics radically different from SE: instead, we find a dialect of English, with certain extensions and modifications of rules to be found in other dialects. The language spoken by the Thunderbirds, Jets and Cobras can be made to appear quite different from standard English, by starting with the assumption that it _is_ very different, that the "true" dialect consists of all the variants which differ from SE, and setting aside any variant which resembles SE. The investigator is thus free to report examples which strike him as interesting and pertinent, and neglect the rest.

The methods we employed in Chapter III were plainly the reverse of this procedure: we took as our basic representation of the vernacular what was said in the most excited and spontaneous interaction of the NNE peer groups, and we held ourselves accountable to everything that was said. It is sometimes felt that if one goes to younger and younger age groups, that the the unwanted variation in linguistic rules will disappear; but in our recent work with children six-to-eight years old, we do not find that this is the case. These younger children do show some characteristic differences from older children--but we do not find anywhere the "pure" dialect that is obtained by extrapolating from those utterances that are maximally different from standard English.

(2) We also report that the verbal capacities of ghetto children are much greater than those found by other investigators. Our approach to the speech act itself, and to the speakers of the language, is partly responsible. We study the use of language by children outside of school and the home --that is, outside of any adult-dominated environment. Many of the reports on the "verbal deprivation" of ghetto children are based on tests carried out under the most unfavorable conditions. As an example, we would like to cite one such piece of data: an entire interview with a preadolescent Negro boy in a New York City school. This is a characteristic example from a large number of controlled studies of children's verbal capacity. The child is alone in a school room with the investigator, a young, friendly white man, who is instructed to place a toy on the table and say, "Tell me everything you can about this." The interviewers remarks are in parentheses.

(Tell me everything you can about this.) [Plunk].

[12 seconds of silence]

(What would you say it looks like?)

[8 seconds of silence]

A space ship.

(Hmmmm.)

[13 seconds of silence]

Like a je-et.

[12 seconds of silence]

Like a plane.

[20 seconds of silence]

(What color is it?)

Orange. [2 seconds]. An' whi-ite. [2 seconds]. An' green.

[6 seconds of silence]

(An' what could you use it for?)

[8 seconds of silence]

A jet.

[6 seconds of silence]

(If you had two of them, what would you do with them?)

[6 seconds of silence]

Give one to some-body.

(Hmmm. Who do you think would like to have it?)

[10 seconds of silence]

Clarence.

(Mm. Where do you think we could get another one of these?)

At the store.

(O- ka-ay!)

The social situation which produces such defensive behavior is that of an adult asking a lone child questions to which he obviously knows the answers, where anything the child says may well be held against him. It is, in fact, a paradigm of the school situation which prevails as reading is being taught (but not learned).

We can obtain such results in our own research, and have done so in our work with younger brothers of the Thunderbirds in 1390 Fifth Avenue. But when we change the social situation by altering the height and power relations, introducing a close friend of the subject, and talking about things we know he is interested in, we obtain a level of excited and rapid speech comparable to the group sessions quoted in 4.2.3-5.

The results of the controlled research quoted above are of interest. They submit each child to the same stimulus--and show us how he reacts to the typical school situation. We can use these results to further our understanding of the factors which control speech in school. But if this is taken as a measure of the child's verbal capacity, the results will be disastrous for educational planning. If we want to analyze the reasons for the widespread educational failure that we witness, it is necessary to discriminate between the child's underlying ability or competence, and the amount of attention or effort he puts into a test situation. Educational testing in general does not make this discrimination, and therefore these results give us only a measure of the magnitude of the over-all problem.

Unfortunately, results quite comparable to the interview quoted above have been used as the basis for entire philosophies of pre-school education. Bereiter and his associates have founded a widely disseminated program on the notion that pre-school Negro children have only a "primitive notion of the structure of language," that "the language of culturally deprived children...is not merely an underdeveloped version of standard English, but is a basically non-logical mode of expressive behavior." Bereiter reports that the children in his class communicated by gestures only, "by single words", "or a series of badly connected words or phrases." As evidence of their "pre-logical" mode of expression, Bereiter cites _They mine_ and _Me got juice_. [No further comment is needed on the absence of the copula for those who have read 3.4 of this report; it is difficult to see what is illogical in the second example, unless Bereiter believes that the child thinks that the juice got him!]

Bereiter's report of the verbal capacities of the children in his classroom is a precise and unmistakeable portrait of the boy whose silences and monosyllables are quoted above. We are told that they could not give simple directions such as "Give me the book", or even repeat such sentences. They did not even have the capacity to ask questions. Finally, it is reported, that "without exaggerating...these four-year-olds could make no statements of any kind." (Bereiter 1966: 114).

What can one say to such apparently "factual" reports? It is plain that the writer has a limited knowledge of language and logic, and no understanding of the sociolinguistic factors which govern speech production. If one creates an alien and threatening situation, children will react appropriately. In the conclusions and recommendations that follow, we assume that there will be school systems under less hostile administrators, staffed by teachers with greater insight. Bereiter believes that the goal of language training must be to teach the "culturally deprived" child a different language, and he proceeds "as if the children had no language at all." We believe that on the contrary, any educational advance must begin with an understanding of the language and verbal capacity of the child, and build upon it.

5.1 Findings

The results of this investigation deal with structural differences between NNE and SE (Chapter III) and differences in the use and values of language (Chapter IV).

5.1.1. Structural differences. In 3.10, we presented an outline of the ways in which NNE and SE differ. At the outset (1.1), we asked at what level these differences exist, bearing in mind the theoretical position of generative grammar that dialects of English will differ in fairly low-level rules rather than in basic phrase structure. As each of the various sub-sections of our investigation proceeded, it appeared that this point of view was generally correct. Striking differences in surface structure were frequently the result of late phonological and transformational rules. A superficial view of such forms as He crazy or Ain't nobody do it might lead one to a wide variety of different analyses; but a close examination of the conditions which govern these forms, and the frequencies of the rules concerned, show that these forms are produced by a great many rules which also operate in SE grammar. Differences shown between NNE and SE are of three basic kinds:

(1) Extensions of general English rules to a wider range of environments, as with deletion of is (3.4), negative concord (3.6), or vocalization of r (3.1.2).

(2) Different selections of redundant elements, as in be..ing, (3.4.5), have..ed (3.4.10), and plus, either or, (3.8.2).

(3) The survival of a number of Southern regional forms, such as done, like to, (3.5.7) might could (3.5.6), and embedded questions without complementizer (3.7.3).

In addition, there are one or two positive items which seem to be unique in NNE. The most striking is the invariant be-2, which has attracted so much notice in recent years. There are other developments in the verbal system of NNE which deserve more attention than we have given to them here (3.5). But to focus upon the few exotic or strikingly different elements in NNE is to lose the picture of its over-all fit into the general grammar of English.

5.1.2. Functional differences. In this volume, we have described in detail a number of speech events which do not exist for SE speakers, some of which (like toasts, 4.2.2, and rifting, 4.2.5) are unique to the NNE sub-culture, and some of which (like sounding, 4.2.3-4) exist in attenuated form for speakers of WNS dialects. In these events, we found a high degree of verbal proficiency developed by members of the street culture. To describe the child raised on the streets of the ghetto as "verbally deprived" is wide of the mark. This is an extremely verbal sub-culture, in which the child is bathed in verbal stimulation and verbal contests from morning to night. It cannot be denied that there are isolated children, kept at home or shut out of the peer group, who are actually "non-verbal", but the great majority of the members of the street culture are very verbal indeed. Some talk most in the midst of the larger peer group, others in smaller sets, but they all spend a large part of the day exercising their verbal skill in one way or another.

There is now solid evidence that the NNE vernacular itself is positively valued by speakers of it. Our Subjective Reaction Tests (4.6) showed that all adults endorse the values of "correct speech" in middle class terms, and that there is a stereotyped view that working class speech is associated with physical toughness. But adults who retain their association with lower class culture continue to identify with the NNE forms, and there is good reason to think that the peer group members in school do the same.

In one sense, verbal skill in the street culture is irrelevant to verbal skills in school. Many of the verbal leaders of the peer groups do very badly in reading and writing at school. The reading failure of the peer groups is of a higher order of magnitude than the reading problems of isolated boys (4.3.1). On our reading tests, (3.2.7) and the CC tests, (4.4), it is apparent that most of the peer group members have little perception of the norms and skills which teachers are trying to convey to them. Peer groups such as the Jets are "functionally illiterate": they read very badly, do not read at all outside of school, and think nothing of it. On the other hand, there are speech events within the NNE community which have reversed this trend and stimulated intense interest in reading and learning: the development of Black Muslim ideology among the Cobras is a striking example.

5.2 Reasons why

5.2.1. Structural conflict. To what extent are the differences between NNE and SE structures actually the cause of reading and other educational problems? Do we have a problem of "structural interference" of the sort that is commonly observed with bilinguals? We can certainly find evidence of such interference. In our Memory Tests (3.8), we saw that youngsters who were bound by the NNE dialect could not perceive and repeat back a number of standard SE sentences. Furthermore, the CC Tests (4.4) showed that the extent of use of an NNE rule was inversely related to awareness of the stigma placed on this form (just the reverse of the situation among most adults, who become sensitized to the social values of many of their own non-standard forms). One can find ample evidence of such interference in any list of reading and writing errors, and in the written compositions of Negro school teachers from the South. There are many ways in which we can help to improve the teaching of English by focussing the students' attention in one way or another on the areas of mismatch between NNE and SE structures. In particular, it is important to provide the teacher with the most general rule which governs a particular set of mistakes.

The question remains, how important is such structural interference in reading failure? It is difficult to argue that it is a major factor in preventing the Thunderbirds, Jets and Cobras from reading. Although we can trace some of their reading problems to specific dialect features, the problem is far more general. It is not the case that the peer group members do worse on reading, where their dialect may be a problem, than on arithmetic, where the same low level of achievement prevails. At the same time, there are some tendencies which reflect the interference between SE and NNE. One can observe that even the worst readers have cracked the alphabetic code--they do get the first consonant right, and most of the time, the following vowel as well. But if the word is not immediately familiar, their guesses will not depend upon any accurate reading of the final consonants. One gets the impression that there is a partial loss of confidence in the alphabet, and that this loss centers about final consonants and consonant clusters where NNE shows the most deviation from SE. There is of course no fundamental reason why the consonant cluster simplification rule of 3.2 should lead to reading difficulty--it simply means that there are a few more silent consonants for the NNE reader. But if it is the case that the teacher insists that "past" sounds different from "pass", one can see the possibility of considerable scepticism on the part of the NNE speaker.

We have urged teachers of reading to institute the fundamental distinction between a mistake in reading and a difference in pronunciation, and to avoid dwelling on sounds at all where there are dialect differences concerned. But to speculate on the relative importance of these matters is fruitless until systematic observations are made of corrections of oral reading in the classroom.

In general, it seems clear that any interference between NNE and SE is more difficult to handle because the two grammars are so similar. Problems of teaching English to speakers of Italian are of a different order from those of teaching the rules of SE to NNE speakers. The Italian speakers have no fixed rules of English structure, but the NNE students have already internalized a set of English rules from earliest childhood. The underlying differences between SE and NNE are actually quite subtle; the problem is not that NNE is so remote from SE, but that it is so close.

5.2.2. Functional conflict. As indicated above, we believe that the chief problem is a cultural conflict between the NNE and SE value systems, and that this is expressed in different norms in regard to language. In both the NNE and SE communities, language is used to impress others, to display knowledge, to shock and to please. But in 4.2, we showed that the NNE culture uses radically different means from SE. While there are many skills needed for NNE speech events, one does not find any great emphasis on the exact definition and spelling of terms. This is undoubtedly one of the basic skills that are not practised by youngsters outside of the classroom, no matter how much training in verbal pyrotechnics they receive.

There is also a profound antagonism toward school--not so much as representative of white society, but as the chief exponent of the set of "good" values imposed by a female-dominated society. From earliest years, NNE youngsters have played the game of defiance of middle-class values, which eventually appear to them as purely negative sanctions against the basic activities of their own peer group. Moreover, the school holds up to the youngster sentimental models which are considered "weak" by NNE. The school is presented to the Negro boy through the medium of the lower-middle-class white female. A review of sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this volume will show that the values of the NNE culture are as remote from those of such a teacher as one could manage within our society. In white suburban society, youngsters may be "bad" as a symbol of revolt against their parents or teachers; but in the urban ghettos, no special rebellion is called for. The normal way of thinking and behaving is utterly opposed to that of the authorities.

5.3 Recommendations

In other publications, we will present detailed suggestions for the application of the linguistic data to teaching. Here we feel that it is appropriate to put forward briefly some observations on matters of general policy for solving the educational problems on hand. To do so, we must move away from our data and suggest means and methods for changing a system which is not working. No one is clear on how to work institutional change; and given such change, what the consequences will be. But some measures seem clearly to be called for by the findings of this report.

5.3.1. "Teaching in the vernacular". There have been many reports of success in early reading when children were given their own words to read back.30/ Whether or not primers should be written "in the vernacular" is another question--in fact, we have yet to specify what it means to write something in the vernacular. Is it NNE vernacular to write (a) *He wil'* instead of (b) *He's wild*? This is the practice of dialect literature (and we have adopted it in our own section on narrative analysis 4.8); but as an educational tactic, it must be looked at quite carefully.

The NNE phonetic form [hiwa^o] can be produced from either (a) or (b) above by regular rule. Form (a) is simply closer to the phonetic ground--but in getting there, it suffers from the limitation of all phonetic alphabets in English. A great deal of the value of a writing system in identifying *meaningful* units is lost, with the doubtful gain of some phonetic simplicity. For if we pursue writing of the type (a), the morpheme *wild* will be harder to recognize when it appears in *He wilder than me*, where the [d] is never deleted. The same logic would lead to the spelling *Heez wayld* for SE, which would make it harder for readers to see the identity of the *z* with the *s* in *Boots wayld*, and the relationship to the short *i* in *wilderness*. A primer written in the vernacular may very well adopt such colorful markers as *done* or *be*$_2$, but most of the tricks of dialect writing are phonetic devices of questionable value for the language learner, no matter how emotionally evocative they may be.

5.3.2. "*Teaching English as a foreign language*." From the discussion of 5.1 and 5.2, it should be clear that we regard this slogan as particularly misleading and harmful. NNE is not a foreign language, and SE is not a foreign language to speakers of NNE. Promoting this slogan can only do serious harm to any educational efforts in the ghetto. If one were to argue that "teaching English as a foreign language" merely means paying attention to the points of contrast between SE and NNE, then all teaching of English to everyone should be done in this way. Certainly the first step in any classroom procedure is to find out which rules of that speech community differ from the rules of standard English, and then decide what to teach.

5.3.3. *The teachers*. It has been remarked at many points throughout this study that specific knowledge of the language and culture of the students is necessary to solve the problems on hand. It seems to us more difficult to convey this information to the present teachers from other communities than to train teachers from the NNE community. A lifetime of experience is not easily compressed into a teaching manual; and we are not dealing merely with referential knowledge, but a set of ingrained attitudes. Given the situation presented in these volumes, we do not think it is realistic to expect that new publications or training courses will convert middle-class white teachers into effective teachers of ghetto children. Nor does it seem likely that an adequate number of teachers from the ghetto area will graduate from teacher-training programs in the immediate future.

Our positive recommendation is that auxiliary teachers be admitted into the classroom in sizeable numbers--teachers who do not have the full academic requirements of most city systems. There are many programs for "para-professionals" that have been proposed, but they most often draw upon older women from the ghetto areas. Given the attitude of the NNE male sub-culture towards women, this seems to us a fatal misstep. Any such special license teacher should be male, young enough to know the current community from his own experience, and hip enough to speak the current language. His duties would include four basic tasks:

(1) provide the regular teacher with a continuous flow of matters of local and immediate interest for incorporation into reading materials;

(2) acquaint the teacher with the peer-group structures that prevail inside and outside of school;

(3) offer leadership and provide discipline for the boys, especially in sports;

(4) maintain contact with the boys outside of school, and discover what success if any school programs have in adding to or changing their thinking.

Our general justification for introducing such a special license teacher is that students must be willing to follow a teacher before he can lead them anywhere; and he has to know where they are in the first place.

5.3.4. The values taught by the school. It is evident that the NNE value system cannot be transferred wholesale to the schools, and incorporated into our school system. The schools must maintain their own value system, and play an important role in the socialization of ghetto youth: to give them a realistic view of the norms and practices of our society; to teach long-range planning for the future; to demonstrate the value of a law-governed society; and to advance higher educational goals. But in the early grades, the teaching of SE must be linked directly to the values that are already there, if it is to succeed.

The schools have to show the NNE youngster that he can learn standard English for immediate advantage, as a means of getting other people to do what he wants them to do. To say that SE means money in the bank is easy, but hard to prove in terms of the short-range goals that are clearly visible and believable. But it is not too far-fetched to say that SE is useful for making excuses, arguments, requests and even insults. Most importantly, there must be a strong program for breaking down the identification of standard English with white society. The NNE youngster should be made to feel that he has as much claim to standard English as anyone else. If he is not being given the ability to read and write this language, then he is being cheated out of something that is rightfully his.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Over the course of our contacts with the Jets, we were able to observe the formation of group history (and mythology), crystallizing around two encounters with the Cobras: The Fight in Central Park, discussed here, and The Confrontation at the Door, when Stanley's older brother Mickey led a group of Jets to challenge the Cobras in the empty apartment they were occupying. Through John Lewis's persistent interest in these two events, we accumulated many versions of the same happenings through both Cobra and Jet eyes.

[2] It is difficult to stress too much the importance of a field worker being out in the street every day. In the case of the Cobras, the ideology and composition of the group was shifting so rapidly that it was plainly necessary. But even in the case of a relatively stable group such as the Jets, the field worker's daily contacts allowed him to match what was said against what was done. As one becomes a part of the group--even a peripheral part--expectations arise that one will be present, and absence becomes an event.

[3] Some of the younger Jets, who had had intercourse with girls for many years, did not believe it possible that someone would drink milk from a woman's breasts; and in general were incredibly naïve about sexual matters.

[4] I am indebted to Erving Goffman for this view of the shifting focus of interaction in the Jets II session.

[5] The simple division of membership into "members" and "marginal members" of 4.3.1 is elaborated into "core", "secondary" and "peripheral" members in the analysis of 4.3.2. In both cases, non-membership is the same criterion: a lame is a lame. In a technical sense, "peripheral members" are not members of the club, but some are prevented from being full members by such neutral facts as age (Duce), and would be classified as marginal members in 4.3.1. Others are not full members because other value systems interfere (Rickey S.), and they are classed as non-members in 4.3.1.

[6] David's father was home, but did not take a commanding position in family life. At one point, David disparaged his father because he cleaned toilet bowls.

[7] Whistling and humming to oneself is a feature here of "public behavior in private". In experiments with white

noise which eliminates audio-monitoring, the same phenomenon can be observed.

[8] See Fishman (1965) for a presentation of these issues, and especially the discussion of pp. 131 ff.

[9] For all of the formant measurements and pitch tracings reported here, a Kaye Sonograph 6061B was used. The tracings of the fourth harmonic were done with a 6076C Scale Magnifier.

[10] Given the approach to natural speech used here, it is not possible that the main phonological variable being tested will be the *only* variable between two sentences; our techniques insure that it will be the *dominant* one.

[11] As noted in 2.1, our sample of lower-working-class men was supplemented by four men at the HARYOU Rehabilitation Center. Three of these men were born in the South, so that our Northern Lower Working Class group remained small.

[12] In general, Southerners showed considerable sensitivity to S4, and discriminated between S1 and S4 more than Northerners. The Cobras also marked S4 very differently from S1 on the "Self-Knowledge" scale--much lower.

[13] There have been a number of occasions in the past when we found that speakers who habitually say [d] and [t] for *this* and *thing* do not identify their own usage or that of their community with the dialect writing *dese*, *dis*, *ting*. These softly articulated lenis stops are often not heard as varieties of *d* and *t*, except by the highest status group.

[14] F.K. is a Midwesterner in origin, and therefore has a native facility with retroflex [ṛ].

[15] It is worth noting here that F.K. recites dialect poetry, and has developed a public style for this purpose.

[16] Judgments on the SR Test tend to be much more extreme than the labels would justify, just as in SSENYC. If subjects do not like a particular sentence, they tend to mark it very far down without regard for labels.

[17] Note that the Middle Class group is almost completely Northern--the one Southern Middle Class subject has been added to these totals, but does not differ from the others in any of these comparisons.

[18] Mr. McT. said that he had been known as "the sheriff without a gun" and told several stories to show how

well he was regarded by the Negro community. However, comments from some of the members of the Negro community on St. Helena Island did not confirm this.

[19] Another community which shows this strong influence of Negro speech on working-class white youth is Highland Park, a white section of Detroit surrounded by the Negro community.

[20] D.H. did not use the term mother-wit for common sense; see 4.1.5.

[21] These three rhymed couplets are delivered in an off-hand manner, without stressing the rhymes at all. The various interpolations such as you dig it effectively disguise the device except for those who are on the alert for it.

[22] This is a case of the NNE custom of using say for general go surviving in adult speech. See 4.1.5.

[23] If the action is suspended at a point which does not appear, on inspection, to be worth evaluating, the narrator creates the effect of rambling or wandering without getting to the point. But noone is accused of not getting to the point when he suspends the action at an appropriate time.

[24] The quasi-modals produce many problems which are not fully resolved. There are some very close to the "true" modals in meaning, like needs to, ought to; though they do not flip-flop, they are basically sentence modifiers of the It ought to be that.. type, and they are plainly evaluative. The situation is less clear with start and keep (on). The inchoative start does not seem to function as an evaluative element, but keep is almost always so: "I kept on hitting him". But in this sense, keep is surely an intensifier, not a comparator.

[25] It seems clear that there is a temporal slot before the subject, filled by then or when clauses. But when a temporal phrase such as ever since then is introduced at this point, it seems heavily marked.

[26] Wife-swapping is of course a complex nominalization, though fairly well fixed in the lexicon. It occurs here in the complement where such features are most easily accomodated in speech.

[27] The form say cannot be taken as historical present, since it is regularly used for the past in NNE when no other present tense irregular forms occur. See Table 4-8.

[28] The past progressive was...ing cannot be taken as

an addition to basic narrative syntax in many cases, since it seems to serve as a narrative clause. While was...ing is usually simultaneous with other events, it is occasionally only extended, and performs the work of a narrative head. For example: "And got back--it was a tent show--she was laying on a cot with an ice bag on her head."

[29] For the reasons given above in footnote 28, be...ing is not included in the extensives here.

[30] Lawrence Kasdon has told of such a procedure with beginning readers in Hawaii, where the first words the children read were their own stories written down by the teacher.

APPENDIX A

NOBODY KNOWS YOUR NAME

Last year I went out for the basketball team, and I made out better than I expected. I wasn't too big, but I was quick on my feet, and my jump shot used to drop in when it counted. The coach told me himself I was a real help to the school.

But you couldn't tell that to Eleanor. No matter if I did good or bad, she'd ask me after every game: "Why can't you be the man to put it in the basket?" I'd tell her, "Look, Eleanor, everybody can't be a star. I'm not a forward; I'm not a center: I'm a guard. I play the back court."

"But you passed it to Lester again," she used to say, "you must have passed it to Lester sixty times, and he missed it most of the time. Why don't you make the shots?" "It's easy enough to explain," I told her, "if you only know what's what. Lester is seven-foot-two; I'm five foot ten. He just twists his wrist and puts it in.

She wouldn't see it, and I couldn't make her see it. I'd talk till I was out of breath, but I might as well have kept my mouth shut. It was always something: if it wasn't this thing, it was that thing, or the other thing. I'd tell her again, "Look Eleanor, I'm not supposed to be a star. I'm not a forward; I'm not a center: I'm a guard. I play the back court."

Then she tried a new line. "I know you're right," she said. "But what about my pride? I don't think any of my friends remember if you're a center or an end or a tackle. Nobody knows your name!"

She made my blood boil. I said I wasn't going to hog the ball to please her. I was ready for murder or worse. And she said she wouldn't go out with me any more if I didn't score a lot of points. So I told the coach about it. He said, "Artie, everybody can't be a star. You're a good team man. It should be an easy game tomorrow night, so we'll keep setting you up."

They fixed me up to look good all right. I just hung under the basket, and everybody passed me the ball. I pushed the easy ones in, and nobody noticed when I missed. By the end of the game, I had thrown in thirty-three points. The whole school was cheering for me: everybody was shouting my name.

Everybody that is, but Eleanor. I looked for her here, there, everywhere--but there wasn't hide nor hair of her. Finally I called her father on the phone. "I just made thirty-three points, Mr. Jones--but I can't find Eleanor. Do you know where she is?"

Her father said, "Just a minute." Then he said, "She says she can't come to the phone right now, son. She's watching the Dave Clark Five on Channel 2. But she says, will you please do it for her again next week--she can watch you then."

Next year I'm going out for the swimming team--under water. Down there, nobody--but nobody--is going to know my name.

NOBODY KNOWS YOUR NAME

Last year I went out for the basketball team, and I made out
better than I expected. I wasn't too big, but I was quick on my feet,
zero and my jump shot used to drop in when it counted. The coach told me himself
I was a real help to the school.

But you couldn't tell that to Eleanor. No matter if I did good
(eh) or bad, she'd ask me after every game: "Why can't you be the man to put
it in the basket?" I'd tell her, "Look, Eleanor, everybody can't be a
(r) star. I'm not a forward; I'm not a center: I'm a guard. I play the
back court."

(st^V) "But you passed it to Lester again," she used to say, "you must
have passed it to Lester sixty times, and he missed it most of the time.
(ts) Why don't you make the shots?" "It's easy enough to explain," I told her,
"if you only know what's what. Lester is seven-foot-two; I'm five foot
(st^K) ten. He just twists his wrist and puts it in."

(dh) She wouldn't see it, and I couldn't make her see it. I'd talk
(th_+) till I was out of breath, but I might as well have kept my mouth shut. It
(th_i,dh_i) was always something: if it wasn't this thing, it was that thing, or the
other thing. I'd tell her again, "Look Eleanor, I'm not supposed to be
(r) a star. I'm not a forward; I'm not a center: I'm a guard. I play the
back court."

(AY) Then she tried a new line. "I know you're right," she said.
"But what about my pride: I don't think any of my friends remember if
(in) you're a center or an end or a tackle. Nobody knows your name!"

(OY) She made my blood boil. I said I wasn't going to hog the ball to
(work) please her. I was ready for murder or worse. And she said she wouldn't go
out with me any more if I didn't score a lot of points. So I told the coach
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up."

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(st^K) basket, and everybody passed me the ball. I pushed the easy ones in,
(th_i) and nobody noticed when I missed. By the end of the game, I had thrown
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